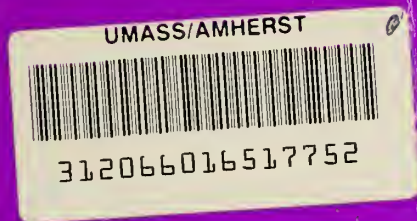
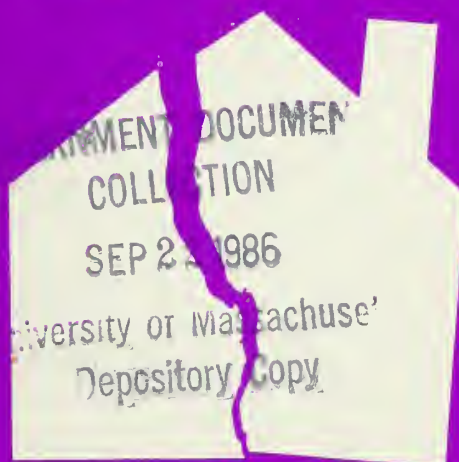


MASS.  
H230.2  
F92v2



# PREVENTING FAMILY VIOLENCE:



## A Curriculum For Adolescents

Developed through a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Women's Health Unit. Printed courtesy of The Boston Globe Foundation.



# *The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

Michael S. Dukakis, Governor

Phillip Johnston, Secretary of Human Services

Bailus Walker, Jr., Public Health Commissioner

Design: Jim Gordon

# PREVENTING FAMILY VIOLENCE:

## A Curriculum For Adolescents

**Copyright 1984 by Family Violence Curriculum Project, Boston, Massachusetts**

Resource Center for the Prevention  
of Family Violence and Sexual Assault  
Massachusetts Department of Public Health  
150 Tremont St.  
Boston, MA 02111  
(617) 727-0941

## **FAMILY VIOLENCE CURRICULUM PROJECT MEMBERS**

David Bilides, Emerge  
Ken Busch, Emerge (Phase I)  
Elba Caraballo, Casa Myrna Vazquez  
Pam Chamberlain, Dept. of Education  
Charlotte Clarke, Transition House (Phase I)  
Janet Kahn, American Institutes for Research  
Susan Klaw, Help for Abused Women and their Children  
Freada Klein, Project Director (Phase I)  
Julia Perez, University of Massachusetts  
Wendy Sanford, Boston Women's Health Collective (Phase I)  
Lynn Smitley, Project Coordinator (Phase I)  
Adria Steinberg, Educational Consultant  
Mercedes Tompkins, Project Director  
Naomi Lippin, Project Coordinator

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT / CREDITS**

Developed and Tested by: David Bilides, Ken Busch, Elba Caraballo, Pam Chamberlain, Charlotte Clarke, Susan Klaw, Freada Klein, Wendy Sanford, Julia Perez, and Mercedes Tompkins.

Written and Edited by: Susan Klaw, Freada Klein, Wendy Sanford, Adria Steinberg.

Administrative Staff: Maria Elena Gonzales, Naomi Lippin, Lynn Smitley Mercedes Tompkins.

Special Thanks:

Lisa Cole, Meg Goldman, Jim Gordon, Janet Kahn, Yvonne Lutter, Carolyn Ramsey.

And to:

Educational Development Center of Newton and Illusion Theater of Minneapolis for use of their materials; Danvers Alternative Schools, Swampscott High School, City Roots, Boston Health Book Collective's Prison Project, 12th Baptist Church. Alianza Hispana and Project Rap's Adolescent Shelter for agreeing to test the curriculum; and the Coalition of Battered Women's Service Groups for support and information.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>p.1</b>
<b><u>UNIT I: INTRODUCTION TO FAMILY VIOLENCE .....</u></b>	<b>p.15</b>
Unit Overview and Introduction to Students; Family Violence Statistics; What Is Abuse?; Human Graph Exercise; Ambiguous Questionnaire.	
<b><u>UNIT II: CHILD ABUSE.....</u></b>	<b>p.28</b>
Unit Overview and Introduction to Students; What Do You Know?; Child Abuse Information Sheet; Imagine You Are Stephen; Portrait of Sally; Tough Spot; How Could You Handle It?	
<b><u>UNIT III: CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE .....</u></b>	<b>p.44</b>
Unit Overview: Definition and Explanations; Child Sexual Abuse Information Sheet; What It Was Like To Be An Incest Victim; Ruth's Story or Film "No More Secrets"; Incest Attitude Form.	
<b><u>UNIT IV: WOMEN ABUSE.....</u></b>	<b>p.63</b>
Unit Overview and Introduction to Students; Famous Names Exercise; Skit on Battering or Film "Deck The Halls"; Experiencing Abuse – Speaker or Film "We Will Not Be Beaten"; Help for Battered Woman and Their Children: Speaker; Working with Men Who Batter.	
<b><u>UNIT V: DATE RAPE .....</u></b>	<b>p.79</b>
Unit Overview; Ellyn's Story or Film "Party Games"; Saying What You Mean Role Play or Film "End Of The Road"; Relationship Contract.	
<b><u>UNIT VI: GENDER ROLE STEREOTYPES AND SOCIALIZATION.....</u></b>	<b>p.93</b>
Unit Overview and Introduction to Students; Stereotype Exercise; Growing Up Male and Female; Television Viewing Homework and Discussion.	
<b><u>UNIT VII: STRESS .....</u></b>	<b>p.103</b>
Unit Overview and Introduction to Students; What is Stress?; Stress Information Sheet; Responding to Stress.	
<b><u>UNIT VIII: PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION .....</u></b>	<b>p.113</b>
Handling Anger; How Not to be Abusive; What Would You Do If?; Governor's Commission on Ending Family Violence; Producing a Resource Guide.	
<b><u>RESOURCE LIST .....</u></b>	<b>p.130</b>



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2014

<https://archive.org/details/preventingfamily00klaw>



## INTRODUCTION

Francine and Michael, both juniors in high school, had been dating for about three months. They spent more and more of their time together – walking to and from school, lunch periods, and many evenings. They each felt that no one understood them as well as they understood each other. Francine's mother, although she was fond of Michael, felt their relationship had grown too exclusive; she was urging Francine to spend more time with other friends. At Francine's request they tried to mix more than they usually did. One night at a party, Francine danced with a senior who was new this year. Between dances, Michael approached Francine and told her it was time to leave. Michael was clearly angry, so Francine reluctantly agreed. On their walk home, Michael was tense and quiet, refusing to answer Francine's questions about what was going on. As they approached their favorite bench in the neighborhood park, Michael exploded. He began shaking and slapping Francine, calling her a whore and threatening to "beat the shit out of her" if she ever talked with the new guy at school again. Francine ran home crying, upset and confused. Michael was her best friend and she couldn't imagine not having him in her life. Michael arrived home stunned. He had heard his upstairs neighbor pushing his wife around a few times, but had never done anything like it himself. His anger scared him and he was amazed that he had hit someone he cared about so much.

A substantial number of teenagers today witness or experience some form of violence at home — battering, marital rape, child abuse or incest. Some young men already act violently or coercively in their peer relationships, especially with persons with whom they are (or might be) sexual. Many young women have come to accept such behavior as inevitable.

Teenagers live in two, sometimes conflicting, worlds. Their bodies are becoming adult yet they sometimes feel or are treated like children. They move increasingly in the world of their own relationships, sexual and otherwise, yet family relationships still shape their daily lives and form their expectations about intimacy. They are more physically powerful than before, more capable of inflicting harm on themselves or others, and they are just in the process of figuring out when are right or wrong times to use that power. They are expected to take on more and more adult responsibilities, yet face the frustration and stress of finding few satisfying roles to play in society (witness the youth unemployment rate). Because of all these conflicting experiences, teenagers are often searching for role models and for values to guide them through large decisions and everyday situations. It is an ideal time to present alternatives to the patterns of violence which they may have experienced or witnessed at home.

The Family Violence Curriculum has been developed to help high school teachers and youth workers teach about family violence. The broad purpose of the curriculum is to help teenagers cope with violence at home and avoid repeating violent patterns in their own lives. The curriculum encourages young people to see violence as an inappropriate response to stressful situations, and asks them to reexamine their attitudes on a wide range of issues that interweave with family violence (like gender role stereotyping and racial prejudice).

Teaching teenagers about family violence will not only protect a future generation by breaking the cycle of violence, but may provide immediate intervention for those who are currently abused or abusive. Furthermore, a teenager with outside support may be able to help younger siblings or even older relatives who are at risk.



## A. THE FAMILY VIOLENCE CURRICULUM

The Family Violence Curriculum is designed to be very flexible, so that it can be utilized in whole or in part, in a variety of settings, from the classroom to a teen center to a residential youth facility.

The curriculum contains eight units:

- 1) Introduction to Family Violence
- 2) Child Abuse
- 3) Child Sexual Abuse
- 4) Woman Abuse
- 5) Date Rape
- 6) Gender Role Stereotypes and Socialization
- 7) Stress
- 8) Prevention and Intervention

Each unit includes a number of different activities and would take from two to five sessions (50 minutes each) to complete. To assist teachers in planning, we have provided the approximate time frame for each activity. But, the size of the group and their interest in the topic and pursuing discussion, will be the real determinants of the duration of each activity. In testing the curriculum we found that the same activity could take very different amounts of time, depending on the group and the setting.

The curriculum has been tested, in part or as a whole in a variety of school settings, both urban and suburban, private and public. It can be introduced into courses on health, social science, psychology, current events, law, family living, modern problems, and ethics. It is very appropriate for the peer education programs many high schools now have. Alternative schools, church youth groups, and residential youth facilities have proved to be successful settings as well.

If you have only a few sessions to devote to the curriculum, you might want to focus on one or two of the units that seem of greatest relevance to the group, or you could select one or two activities (equivalent to one 50 minute session) from each of the units. The point is to adapt the curriculum to the needs and interests of the class and to the constraints of the setting. Whatever combination of activities you select, we strongly recommend reading the entire curriculum, or at least the entire unit, before using any of the materials. A great deal of background information is included with the activities. Taken as a whole, the Family Violence Curriculum provides a course on family violence for teacher/facilitators as well as for teenagers.

## CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES

The curriculum's specific objectives are:

- to help adolescents explore their attitudes towards violence;
- to help them recognize cultural messages that encourage or condone violence;
- to help them understand the consequences of violent behavior for the abuser, the victim, and the society at large;
- to help decrease their acceptance of violence as a problem solving technique;
- to improve their awareness of common sources of stress, and to increase their knowledge of non-violent methods of coping with stress;
- to increase their ability to accept and discuss their feelings;
- to help them recognize stereotypes about racial groups and gender role behavior, and to see how these contribute to family violence;
- to familiarize them with their legal rights and responsibilities in relation to violence and victimization;
- to make them aware of local resources for coping with family violence.

Many of these are long-term objectives. The curriculum is primarily about values and attitudes, and the effects you may hope for will come cumulatively over the months and years ahead. Psychologists studying young people's moral development have found that they begin to have ideas and values long before they act on them.

This means that the teacher/facilitator should not be discouraged if the participants' behavior does not change noticeably. Important seeds are planted if you create an awareness about family violence and help young people begin to articulate their values and listen to what others have to say.

## DEFINITIONS

Our use of the term family violence in the curriculum covers several specific areas. Child abuse, child sexual abuse within family settings, battering, and rape within families and relationships are the forms of violence we have emphasized.

Abuse . . . Abuse is used generally to mean situations where: the abuser violates trust; the abuser threatens to repeat the behavior; the abused person feels trapped; and the abused person gets blamed. Abuse can be physical, as in hitting or beating someone. It can also be verbal or emotional, where one is constantly threatened and put down.

Rape . . . The legal definition of rape varies somewhat state to state. However, it usually means forced intercourse with vaginal, anal or oral penetration by an object or a part of the rapist's body. Acquaintance rape or date rape refer to forced intercourse by a person who the victim knows. Marital rape means forced intercourse by one's spouse.

Battering . . . Battering refers to a whole range of physical behavior – slapping, hitting, beating — usually perpetrated by a man towards his wife or the woman with whom he is in a relationship. Battering usually means ongoing and escalating behavior. Often battering goes along with verbal threats and abuse.

Child Abuse . . . Child abuse includes physical and emotional abuse (usually verbal), and physical and emotional neglect. Abuse is the non-accidental commission of any act by a caretaker which causes harm or the threat of harm to the child's well being. Sexual abuse is one type of child abuse. Neglect involves the consistent failure of the caretaker to provide the child with food, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision or emotional support.

Child Sexual Abuse . . . Child sexual abuse is tricked or forced sexual contact between a child and an adult for the sexual stimulation of the adult. It includes a range of behaviors, from fondling to intercourse. It can also mean an encounter with a man who exposes himself, child pornography or prostitution. Over 80% of all child sexual abuse is perpetrated by people the child knows or is related to: blood relatives, stepparents, caretakers, guardians, and family friends.

## A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE

"People of color." We use the term "person of color" or "people of color" to refer to those people who are Native American, Latino, Asian-American or Afro-American. This is a coalition term. In the middle and late 1970's people from all these groups got together in various conferences and meetings and decided to try to stop struggling so much among themselves. Instead they wanted to work together to challenge the larger U. S. system which denies all of them access to goods, services, and opportunities because of the color of their skin and/or their language.

"Victim." Anyone who is battered, raped or otherwise sexually abused is a victim of crime. She or he has been victimized by someone who is stronger or more powerful. In this curriculum, however, we have chosen to use the word "victim" seldom. Too often the term, especially applied to women, becomes a descriptive title which hangs on long after the actual event or events. Not only is it used to "explain" her behavior in specific situations, but can also become a general defining characteristic of her. For example, "Have you met Joanne, the new downstairs neighbor? She works at the post office and is a rape victim." While we want to do justice to the intense feelings of violation caused by abuse, we believe that it is not helpful for a woman if people continue to see her (or she to see herself) as a victim. We want to emphasize the active role a woman can play in responding to what has happened to her, and in pursuing prevention for herself and others. In the same fashion, women in support groups for those who have experienced incest choose to call themselves not incest victims but incest survivors.

"Woman abuse." We refer to woman abuse instead of wife abuse, because there are many abusive relationships where the man and woman are sexually involved, but not married.



## **B. PREPARATION FOR TEACHER/FACILITATORS**

Family violence is a charged and challenging topic. Whether you are a teacher or a youth worker, you will need some preparation before setting out to use this curriculum. Your willingness and your interest are the most crucial factors in using the material effectively.

This section addresses briefly five areas in which you will want some readiness. The areas covered here are:

- 1) Understanding family violence – its prevalence, forms, commonly held myths vs. facts, the legal situation, and resources for victims and perpetrators.
- 2) Awareness of one's own attitudes toward the causes of family violence, toward those who act violently and toward those who are trapped in violent situations.
- 3) Techniques for creating a safe climate for young people to air their views and experiences.
- 4) Creating entry points for boys.
- 5) Knowledge of basic crisis intervention skills to respond to those who become upset by any of the material in the curriculum.

## **UNDERSTANDING FAMILY VIOLENCE**

Battering, marital rape, child abuse and child sexual abuse are not new phenomena. Rather, their recent recognition by the media, the legal system, and the women's movement have helped the general public realize the extent of these problems. People used to see many aspects of daily life, including family violence, as private, personal dilemmas. Through consciousness-raising groups, speakouts, and campaigns to expose unjust treatment of victims, women came to see the commonality of their experiences, and to redefine forms of family violence as social problems. The rates of family violence are far too high to dismiss it merely as the result of maladjusted individuals.

As forms of family violence have come to light, many important reforms have taken place. Throughout the United States, laws have been changed, making it easier for those who have experienced violence to come forward to report their experiences. Services, such as emergency housing, counseling and advocacy are available for battered women, batterers, and children who have been abused. Although these changes are critical, many myths still confuse our understanding of family violence. Presented below are some of the most commonly held myths about battering, rape, child abuse and child sexual abuse.



## **1) Myth: The extent of the problem is exaggerated.**

Battering myth: "Battered" is too extreme a term; serious assault is rare.

Fact: While the term "battering" covers a range of behavior, the myth ignores the reality that in most cases battering escalates over time. One slap in a 15 year relationship is very uncommon; rather, one slap becomes the first step toward a situation of chronic abuse. It may even end in murder. A Kansas Police Department study indicated that in 85% of domestic homicide cases, the police had been called at least once before the killing; in half the cases, they had been summoned at least five times prior to the murder.

Rape myth: "Real rapes" — i.e. strangers leaping from bushes — are rare.

Fact: "Real rape" is, in most states, forced sexual intercourse, regardless of the relationship between the perpetrator and victim. A Los Angeles county study revealed that a woman's chances of being raped at some point during her life, over the age of 14, are one out of three. This includes rape between acquaintances, which currently account for over half of reported rapes, and a far greater proportion of unreported rapes.

Child sexual abuse myth: Child sexual abuse is rare, and can be warded off by telling children not to accept rides or candy from strangers.

Fact: Although extremely difficult to assess, it is currently estimated that one out of every five female children is sexually abused before the age of 18. For male children, the estimate is approximately one out of ten. The overwhelming majority of child sexual abusers are adults the child knows and trusts: family members, neighbors, babysitters or family friends.

## **2) Myth: It can't happen to me or in my family.**

For all forms of family violence, it is psychologically comforting to think we can escape risk by being careful about where we go and who we let into our homes. In cases of battering in particular, we think our family is different, not a "problem family."

Fact: Rape, battering, child abuse and child sexual abuse usually take place between people who know each other, and often between those who care deeply about each other. Unfortunately, none of us is immune.

### **3) Myth: Victims bring the abuse on themselves.**

Battering myth: Women nag their husbands, and that's why they get abused.

Rape myth: Only women who dress or act provocatively are raped.

Child sexual abuse myth: Children who've been sexually abused have been seductive.

Child abuse myth: Children are beaten because they have behaved badly.

Fact: Each of these is a variation of victim-blaming. Each ignores the perpetrator's responsibility for controlling his own actions, and points to the abused as at fault. In most cases the person being abused has done nothing out of the ordinary to provoke the abuser. Furthermore, violent, abusive behavior is not excusable even if the victim's dress, or tone of voice, or behavior has been inappropriate or annoying.

### **4) Myth: Perpetrators are psychopaths.**

Fact: The research on family violence has not borne out the theory of individual psychopathology. Certainly some perpetrators are "sick" by societal standards, but, for the most part, they are psychologically and sexually normal, as measured by standard testing mechanisms. Holding this myth denies the ways in which both gender role stereotyping and societal patterns and values promote and condone violence, especially when it is behind closed doors.

### **5) Myth: Perpetrators are poor and/or men of color.**

Fact: Rapists, batterers, and those who commit child abuse and child sexual abuse come from all racial, cultural and class backgrounds. Many white people believe that family violence is more widespread amongst people of color. Sometimes this results from official statistics, which are based on publicly funded services. Since most people of color have far fewer resources than do most white people, they cannot choose to go to private doctors, lawyers, and counseling services for help. Cases that private practitioners see which do not come to the attention of the police, courts, hospitals, or other public institutions, remain hidden from official statistics. Once again, this myth diverts us from carefully examining our own beliefs, and from questioning mainstream values. As a nation we rely on violence and the threat of violence to solve international problems. We reward individuals who become successful even at the expense of others. We deny people of color and women opportunities to pursue occupations, interests, and lifestyles that match their individual talents and tastes.

**6) Myth: Not reporting the abuse or staying in the relationship is evidence that the victim was not really hurt.**

Battering myth: Women who stay in abusive relationships are masochistic.

Fact: Recent research supports common sense – women who are economically and emotionally dependent on a batterer are trapped in their situations. Many factors make it difficult to leave: relatives, friends and many counselors are more concerned about “breaking up the family” than with helping someone escape abuse. Employment discrimination against women and a generally tight job market make it difficult for most women to be able to support themselves and their children above the poverty level.

Rape myth: If it was really rape, a woman would report the crime.

Fact: Until recently, rape laws made it extremely difficult to prosecute; the victim’s character and sexual history were on trial. Although the laws have changed, attitudes and conviction rates have not caught up. A study conducted in Portland, Oregon, found that fear of being blamed; fear of police, court and hospital procedures; and fear of the rapist returning all kept women from reporting the rape to officials.

Child abuse myth: Not telling an adult about the abuse is evidence that it wasn’t really a negative experience for the child.

Fact: Children, especially abused children, may be fearful of adults, and thus be reluctant to tell of their experiences. Since often the abuser was someone the child trusted, she/he may not know how another trusted adult will respond. Furthermore, children who have been abused (especially sexual abuse) are often threatened or bribed to prevent them from “telling.” Even when they do seek help they are often accused of making up stories or exaggerating.

**7. Myth: With time, those who have experienced violence forget about it.**

Fact: Since rape, battering and child sexual abuse have only recently been recognized as problems of epidemic proportion, we do not have reliable information on the long-term consequences for the victims. Clinical studies suggest that some women who have experienced rape report fear, anxiety, depression and other disruptions of their daily lives many years after the assault. Similarly, some adults who were sexually abused as children report an array of problems in being able to establish healthy, intimate relationships. We know that a disproportionate number of men who were sexually abused as children become rapists, and that adults who were abused as children are more likely to abuse their own children. Those who grew up witnessing family violence are somewhat more likely to be abusers or abused as adults. When violence is seen daily as a response to problems, it not only provides a negative model but becomes instilled in the viewer as inevitable.



## AWARENESS OF YOUR OWN ATTITUDES

Your own values and biases about family violence will affect how you present the material and handle questions or experiences that students bring up. One way to check your assumptions is to go through the myths and facts just listed and consider honestly which of the myths you hold. These myths are widespread, and many of us have had no other information for most of our lives. It is no surprise that they remain in the back of our minds. A student reports being raped by a date and the question that may come up in our minds automatically is, “What did she do to bring it on herself?” When a thought like this comes, it helps to note to yourself that it is a victim-blaming response, based on the myth that women ask for abuse, and to think of another way of looking at the situation.

Consider, too, what role expectations you have for men and for women. Do you hold gender role stereotypes which might lead you in some circumstances to condone a man pushing a woman around (in cases of sexual jealousy, for instance), or to see family violence as a private affair? How do you feel about encouraging boys to be more gentle and expressive, and girls to be stronger? Since rigid gender stereotyping seems to contribute to both the perpetration and acceptance of abuse, these are important questions to ask.

If you have no personal experience with family violence (in your family or in a friend’s family), one helpful step towards understanding and empathy would be to put yourself in the shoes of someone who has. Imagine that you have experienced battering, marital or date rape, child abuse or child sexual abuse, and answer the following questions:

- Would I dismiss a violent episode as a one-time occurrence, brought on by unusual circumstances?
- Who would I speak to about the situation? Family members, co-workers, police, friends?
- What response would I expect from each of these people?
- Would I leave the relationship? Where would I go?

If you can imagine overlooking the situation, being too embarrassed to talk with anyone, or fearing blame, then you, too, have taken in society’s messages about family violence. In recognizing this, you will better understand the problems and feelings facing those who encounter abuse.

For any number of reasons, a person may not be comfortable teaching this topic. It’s important to be honest about this. If you find yourself very uneasy with the topic of family violence, or upset or confused by the material in this curriculum, it might be best to find someone else to teach it. You could, for instance, ask a worker from a local shelter to teach it for or with you.

## CREATING A SAFE CLIMATE

Our experience indicates that teenagers welcome the chance to talk about family violence, appropriate roles for men and women, and what they expect intimate relationships to entail. It will help if you create a climate in which they feel comfortable enough to think seriously, to listen to each other, and to say what is on their minds.

Providing a few ground rules for discussion is one step in creating a safe climate. You can announce these yourself, or begin by inviting the group to say what ground rules will make them feel more comfortable talking about a topic that is sometimes upsetting. Here are some examples (you may want to add others from your own experience in groups):

- One person speaks at a time; let a person finish.
- Confidentiality: keep what people say to yourself; do not say anything about it to people who are not in the group.
- Challenge each other's ideas freely, but do not put each other down.
- Say what you are comfortable saying. Do not say or reveal anything you do not want to.
- Listen as well as you can.

How you as the leader speak and act can do a lot to set the atmosphere. If you are comfortable talking about abuse, sexuality, intimacy, and so on, that will make it easier for the participants. Speak directly, avoiding euphemisms. If you do not engage the issue directly, forthrightly and calmly, the students will interpret your discomfort as an unwillingness to deal with violence as it really is. A certain compassionate matter-of-factness will counterbalance the media sensationalism about violence which numbs us to its hurtful effects.

It also helps to let the teenagers know that you think what they have to say on these topics is important. Any experiences they have had are very useful in helping the group understand family violence and know what to do about it.

Certain organizational choices can affect the climate, too. Try to set the chairs up in a circle so participants are facing each other. Sometimes too a discussion goes better if you divide the group into two same-sex groups (see, for example, Unit V, the Relationship Contract).



## **CREATING ENTRY POINTS FOR BOYS**

In many of the forms of family violence dealt with in this curriculum, the perpetrators are predominantly male. This fact may create difficulties for male students. They may feel defensive, angry, or guilty. Such feelings can manifest themselves in a variety of ways: hostile questions, disruptive behavior, or withdrawal.

It is important that you be aware of the difficulties male students may be having and encourage them to express their feelings directly. It might help for you to acknowledge that all this talk about male violence must be hard for the boys, and that the fact that more men are perpetrators of family violence does not imply that all or most men are violent or evil.

The curriculum itself has a number of entry points for boys. Certainly males, as well as females, are victims of child abuse and child sexual abuse. Males as well as females can support female friends and relatives who are being battered or have been raped. The unit on gender roles give both males and females a chance to explore the ways they have been socialized to gender roles that contribute to the perpetuation of family violence. Finally, the units on stress and on prevention and intervention give everyone a chance to explore their own patterns of behavior, and consider alternative patterns.

Throughout the curriculum, we have tried to make the questions open-ended, and have provided suggestions to the teacher at the points we anticipate might be hardest for the male students.

## **RESPONDING WHEN STUDENTS REVEAL DIRECT EXPERIENCE WITH ABUSE**

Given the high rates of all forms of family violence, it is not surprising that within any group of teenagers, some will have been victims, perpetrators or witnesses of violence. Some participants may feel able to speak about their experiences within the group. Others may not feel safe revealing their experiences, yet may give clues. Frequent examples are talking about “a friend” who was victimized when the experience is really one’s own, or asking a question about a “hypothetical” situation. One may blurt out something very revealing, then say nothing for days. Still others may be visibly troubled, but remain silent, may leave suddenly, or may linger after the session. It is important that facilitators anticipate these situations and feel ready to handle them.

If students show any of these signs of being troubled by the material, you could approach them outside of class and ask if they want to talk. If students do reveal that they have experienced abuse, let them know that they are not alone, that it happens to a lot of people. Ask if there is anyone they can talk to about it – aunt, uncle, sister, brother, school counselor, priest, minister, rabbi. Point out that sometimes it really helps to talk to someone; carrying the experience around inside yourself can make you feel awful. Make sure they have a resource sheet of local shelters, hotlines and other referrals, and perhaps look over it with them. Make sure you understand the procedure in your school or agency and the law in your state for reporting child abuse.

Below are some further guidelines on how to respond, adapted from those developed by the Illusion Theatre of Minneapolis, a program which conducts sexual abuse prevention workshops for junior and senior high students.

Educators are not responsible to be the investigator, prosecutor, judge or therapist. In many states, they are responsible to report any suspected incidence of child abuse or child sexual abuse. The educator's primary role in the event of a disclosure is to be a support and resource person. Think of B.A.S.E.R. as a general guide for responding:

**Believe . . .** It is likely that someone who is in an abusive situation will disclose at an "inappropriate" time, e.g. when being disciplined, which is a set-up for her/him not to be believed. It is also likely that the person will not have all the details straight, or tell the entire story, and therefore is discounted or not believed. However, it is very unlikely that a person will make up an abuse experience. Sexual abuse, child abuse and battering are often very embarrassing and difficult to talk about, and it is possible that the one who speaks up will face unfair judgments and accusations. Therefore, if a person wants to "get back at someone," accusing them of sexual abuse is not an easy or likely way to do that.

**Affirm . . .** Instead of assuming the person understands that it is good she/he told about the abuse, verbally acknowledge the importance of talking about it and getting help.

**Support . . .** Even if someone was tricked or manipulated into doing something they "should have known better than to do," the abuse is not their fault; the tricks and manipulations are part of the abuse and victimization process. Reinforce that a person who has been victimized was forced, tricked or manipulated and therefore, is not to blame.

**Empower . . .** An abused person often feels helpless and powerless. By affirming and supporting her/his feelings, listening to her/his concerns, fears and needs, and educating her/him as to all the resources that are available, the person is empowered with a sense of all the options available and her/his ability to no longer be a victim.

**Refer . . .** Just like the student tells the teacher in order to get help, the teacher needs to tell the appropriate resources.

## UNIT I: INTRODUCTION TO FAMILY VIOLENCE

### ACTIVITIES

Family Violence Statistics	10 minutes
What is Abuse? (discussion)	15 minutes
Human Graph (case studies)	35 minutes
Ambiguous Questionnaire	30 minutes

### OVERVIEW

The purpose of this unit is to introduce participants to the types of family violence the curriculum will address: child abuse, child sexual abuse, battering, and acquaintance or date rape. Through participating in the activities, participants gain a better understanding of what abuse is; they also have the opportunity to examine their own attitudes towards abuse and to look at some of the myths and stereotypes which relate to abuse.

Before beginning this unit, we suggest that you reread the information presented in “Understanding Family Violence,” (page 7 of the Introduction). The “Facts and Myths” discussed there will be a useful supplement to the information presented in this unit.

### INTRODUCING THE UNIT TO STUDENTS

Today we are starting a series on family violence, something which affects many of us at one time or another, but that we usually do not get to talk and learn about. By family violence we mean several things. We mean battering or woman abuse, as when a man beats his wife or the woman he lives with. We mean rape – that is, forced sex – not by a stranger but by someone you know and are close to. We mean child abuse. And we mean sexual abuse of children, which is when a relative, family friend or other trusted adult pressures a child into any kind of sexual acts. (When it is a relative who does this, it’s called incest.) The main purpose of this series will be to help all of us to think about family violence, and to know better what it is and what causes it, what we think about it and some ways of dealing with it in our lives. Family violence is upsetting, whether you are witness to it, or having it done to you, or being the perpetrator (that is, the one who does it). In this class it is important that everyone feel free to say what they want and free to keep quiet if that is what they want to do.



## **Activity A: Family Violence Statistics**

### **Purpose:**

To give students a sense of the prevalence of family violence through sharing some statistics.

### **Background:**

Statistics on family violence have only recently been compiled. The data is difficult to collect and analyze primarily because incidences of family violence are so vastly underreported. It is estimated that only one in ten abuse or rape cases ever come to public attention. Even with this underreporting, the statistics are alarming. The statistics included here are based on a combination of national crime statistics and random household surveys. While they do involve some estimates and extrapolations, they are the most accurate figures currently available.

One question frequently asked is whether rape, child abuse and battering are on the rise, or whether they are just being reported more. The answer is probably yes on both accounts. Yes, abuse is being reported more frequently as public awareness of the problem grows and reporting and prosecuting is made easier for victims. But yes, sadly, the actual incidence of abuse is also increasing.

### **Description of Activity:**

1. Duplicate attached statistics sheet.
2. Get students to hazard some guesses as to how frequently abuse occurs. You can do this by turning some of the statistics on the sheet into questions: What percentage of girls do you think are sexually abused? Boys? If you had to guess how often a woman is beaten in this country, what would you guess? Once an hour? Once a minute?
3. Hand out copies of the Family Violence Statistics Sheet. Have students read the statistics aloud and clarify terms where necessary. "Perpetrator" may be an unfamiliar word, for example. Or students may think sexual abuse means intercourse only, whereas in fact it covers a wide range of sexual behaviors from exposing oneself, to fondling, to actual rape.
4. Initiate a brief discussion of the information by asking which of these statistics is most surprising or shocking.

## FAMILY VIOLENCE STATISTICS

MORE THAN 1.4 MILLION CHILDREN ARE SEVERELY NEGLECTED, DEPRIVED, BEATEN OR SEXUALLY ABUSED BY PARENTS OR STEPPARENTS EACH YEAR.

(National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect)

BY THE AGE OF 18, ONE OUT OF FIVE GIRLS (20%) AND ONE OUT OF TEN BOYS (10%) WILL HAVE EXPERIENCED SOME SEXUAL ABUSE. 80% TO 90% OF THE PERPETRATORS ARE MALE FAMILY MEMBERS.

(David Finkelhor, Family Violence Research Program, University of New Hampshire)

EVERY 18 SECONDS A WOMAN IS BEATEN BY HER HUSBAND. 30% OF ALL FEMALE HOMICIDE VICTIMS ARE MURDERED BY THEIR HUSBANDS OR BOYFRIENDS.

(F.B.I. Statistics)

WOMAN ABUSE OCCURS IN ONE-QUARTER TO ONE-HALF OF ALL MALE/FEMALE COHABITING RELATIONSHIPS.

(National Clearinghouse on Domestic Violence)

ONE OUT OF SEVEN WOMEN IS A VICTIM OF MARITAL RAPE.

(Diana Russell, Rape in Marriage)

“DATE RAPE” ACCOUNTS FOR 60% OF ALL REPORTED RAPES. THE MAJORITY OF VICTIMS ARE BETWEEN THE AGES OF 16 AND 24.

(Newsweek, April, 1984.)



## Activity B: Discussion: What is Abuse?

### Purpose:

To help students understand the special dynamics which characterize abuse and differentiate it from assault and to give them room to share any personal knowledge concerning abuse.

### Background:

Being able to define certain behaviors as abusive empowers those who are abused to seek relief, the witnesses to plan appropriate intervention, and the perpetrators to identify their violence as a problem for which they need help.

Very often people tolerate woman battering or child battering because they do not think of it as abuse or as a crime. Instead, they may think of it as necessary discipline ("The kid needed to be taught a thing or two . . ."), and therefore dismiss or accept what was actually abuse. They may excuse it as a natural response to anger or stress ("He had so much on his mind . . ."), as an appropriate response to provocative behavior ("She was asking for it . . ."), or even as a sign of caring ("He may be overreacting, but at least it's a sign he feels strongly . . ."). It is important, then, to identify what is abusive behavior and make clear that it is wrong, so that people do not excuse, dismiss or accept it.

Abuse may include assault, which is physical harm or the threat of it. Abuse also has special dynamics which make it different from assault.

The abuser violates trust. Assault may be done by a stranger. Abuse is done by a family member or someone close to the family.

The abuser threatens to do it again. Usually abuse does not happen just once. Even when it does, the abuser often reminds the abused person of the incident afterwards as a way of threatening her or him and controlling her/his actions.

The abused person feels trapped. Children who are abused often feel scared, confused, guilty, ashamed, loyal, and yearning for love. They do not necessarily want either parent put in jail or to be separated from their parents, they just want the abuse to end. These feelings make it very difficult for children to speak to anyone else about an abusive situation. In addition, they usually get little help. As women consider leaving an abusive situation, they feel trapped by lack of money, inferior employment opportunities, revenge from the abuser, and insensitivity or even hostility from the police or courts. In viewing family violence as a "private affair," society becomes the abuser's accomplice.

The abused person gets the blame. Whether it is woman battering, sexual abuse or child abuse, the abuser usually says in defense that the abused person "asked for it" or deserved it in some way. Other people often think the same thing. ("She was such a nag", "That little girl is so sexy looking" "She led him on", "That kid was looking for a beating.") This is called blaming the victim.

## Description of Activity:

1. Begin by asking students for examples of assault, reminding them of familiar phrases like “assault and battery” and “assault with a deadly weapon”. You might mention also that the legal definition of assault includes threatening a violent act, even if the person does not carry it through. List three examples of assault on the board. Then ask for and list examples of abuse (battering, child abuse, etc.).
2. With both lists before them, ask participants for ways in which abuse differs from assault. Try to help them see the different dynamics of abuse as detailed in the Background section above.
3. Take a moment to note that abuse and assault are treated quite differently. People are routinely arrested and sentenced for assault. However, people are seldom arrested for abuse except when the abuse is so extreme that a child or a woman is killed. Explain how society tends to make excuses for abuse, such as: “She must like it if she stays with him”; “She’s nagging him”; “She was asking for it”; “She was being seductive”. These assumptions will be looked at again, in more detail, in Activity D: Ambiguous Questionnaire, so the discussion here can be brief.
4. As the teacher/facilitator, you can open up broader discussion by describing a personal experience with abuse. It does not have to be something that happened to you. It could be any abusive situation involving a neighbor, friend, schoolmate, etc. that has come to your attention over the years. Then ask whether anyone is aware of any types of abuse happening to someone they know. Do not push students to share. This is early in the curriculum and there will be many other opportunities for them to bring up personal experiences.

## **Activity C: Human Graph**

### **Purpose:**

To encourage participants to develop their own definitions of abuse; to give them practice in identifying the dynamics of abuse discussed in Activity B; to show how widely opinions vary on the issue.

### **Background:**

Look at the attached cases of family and dating interactions. After hearing each case and the possible responses of its characters, each student is asked to indicate how abusive she/he thinks the response is.

Two different ways of structuring the rating of responses are described below. You should select the one that is most comfortable for your setting and group.

### **Description of Activity**

1. Explain that this is an exercise to solicit opinions on abuse. Point out that people have many different ideas about what constitutes abuse.
2. Method A: Have the participants clear away the furniture from the center of the room and mount a sign which says 'ABUSIVE' on one wall of the room; on the opposite side of the room mount a sign which says, 'NOT ABUSIVE'. Read the situations and the different possible responses. For each response, each participant is to indicate how abusive she/he thinks the action is by standing at a representative distance from one of the labeled walls. If there are more than 20 participants or if the space is limited, you could clear enough space for half of the group to participate actively. The rest of the group could watch and try to draw conclusions.

Method B: Have participants arrange their seats in a circle. Explain that you want them to rate each response as either not abusive, somewhat abusive, or very abusive. If they think the response is not abusive, they should remain seated, just as they are. If they think it is somewhat abusive, they should raise both hands. If they think a response is very abusive, they should stand up. (It might be helpful to write these directions on the board, or on newsprint to help students remember how to indicate their opinion.)

3. Tell everyone to listen closely as you read the cases and possible responses. Assign one student or the observing half of the group to note which responses draw the most varying opinions and which draw the most agreement.
4. If Cases 1 and 2 have taken a long time, you could skip Case 3, as Case 4 is similar. You want to be sure to have 10-15 minutes left for discussion.

5. To begin discussion, you could comment on how many different opinions there were. Ask, What does it mean that so many people have different opinions about what is abusive? In the discussion you might say that we all come from different families and backgrounds, and this influences how we define abuse. There is not one correct definition, but the four dynamics of abuse we talked about earlier – violating trust, threat that it will happen again, trapping, or blame of the abused person – are important signs that abuse is happening.

Try to determine whether there is some agreement in the group about what the most abusive response(s) were. Then, ask: Which of the signs of abuse apply in this situation?



## HUMAN GRAPH CASES

1. Dinner has just ended at the Millers' house. Steve's mother is washing the dishes and his father is watching TV. The doorbell rings. It's Mr. Chambers who owns the corner store and he sure sounds angry! He demands to talk with Steve's father. His father calls Steve and his mother into the living room where he is talking with Mr. Chambers. Mr. Chambers stares Steve down. He tells Steve's parents that he saw Steve shoplift some cigarettes from his store.

How abusive is each of these responses?

- Steve's father beats him with a hanger.
- Steve's parents sell his guitar.
- They slap him in the face in front of Mr. Chambers.
- They tell him he's a good-for-nothing slime.
- They don't do anything.
- They discuss it for an hour.
- They yell at him for a solid 20 minutes.

2. Helen has just spent a long afternoon shopping with her three year old brother, Kevin. She's getting a headache. The ice cream cone she gave Kevin to quiet him is dripping down his arm. It's beginning to stain his shirt. They get onto the bus to go home. Kevin starts to sing "Row, row, row your boat". Helen looks up to see who's noticing. A lot of people on the bus are watching, and she sees a classmate of hers at the other end of the bus. Kevin continues to sing over and over again. Helen asks him, begs him, to stop, but he won't!

How abusive is each of Helen's responses?

- She dumps the ice cream cone on Kevin's head.
- She tosses the ice cream cone out of the bus window.
- She hits him on the head.
- She pinches him on the thigh.
- She puts her hand tightly over his mouth.
- She says to Kevin, "When we get home, I'm going to pull the eyes off of your teddy bear if you don't shut up."

3. Tom has been seeing Linda for a long time, only now he's developed a strong interest in another girlfriend. He decides to take Linda to her favorite restaurant to break the news to her. She gets real upset and starts crying aloud in public and calling Tom "dirty names."

How abusive is each of Tom's responses?

- He slaps her in the restaurant to get her to her senses.
- He walks her out and leaves her there.
- He tells her she's an ugly, unattractive pig and he doesn't know why he went out with her to begin with.



4. James and Donna have been dating steadily for several months. Donna begins to feel that more and more of their time together is being spent by themselves and has gradually become quite intimate. When James picks her up tonight, she tells him that she wants to spend more time having fun together the way they did when they first started dating, and that she did not want to spend as much time making out.

How abusive are James' responses?

- He grabs her arm and twists it, saying, "You can't just lead me on and tease me and then just stop all of a sudden".
- He laughs and tells her he knows she likes making out with him and then he drives down a deserted road.
- He listens to Donna and then drives to a deserted spot in the woods. He tells her that she's beautiful and he'd go crazy if they didn't make out when they were together. He then starts kissing her.
- He gets angry and makes her get out of the car, even though it's after dark and they are several miles from Donna's house.

5. Mr. Jacobs has a terrible day at work. He gets home to his family feeling angry.

How abusive is each of Mr. Jacobs' responses?

- He yells at his wife because dinner is not on the table.
- He yells at her if he feels annoyed by her.
- He hits her if he feels annoyed by her.
- He insists that she listens to what a bad day he's had.

## **Activity D: Ambiguous Questionnaire**

### **Purpose:**

To look at the stereotypes and myths which relate to abuse and to encourage participants to look beyond the myths in developing their own ideas.

### **Background:**

In this activity, students fill out and then discuss the attached questionnaire. It is intended to provoke the kind of open ended discussion which helps people clarify their values about a complex issue. Information relevant to each question is listed in the Discussion Guide. See also the Introduction for further background on woman abuse and sexual abuse, especially the “Myths and Facts” section (page 8).

### **Description of Activity:**

1. Have the participants fill out the Ambiguous Questionnaire. Let them know they will not have to hand it in. Allow 10 minutes.
2. When all are done, go over each question one at a time. Ask for a show of hands to see how many “Agree” or “Disagree” for that statement. Try to get several students to answer. Listen to their reasons matter-of-factly and acceptingly, even if you disagree with them. If the group unanimously agrees or disagrees with a statement, ask them to suggest why someone might think otherwise. Encourage the participants to express their opinions freely, to disagree with each other without putting each other down. The discussion will have a tendency to go off on many tangents and digressions. You will have to judge when to refocus.
3. For each statement you will find information and comments in the Discussion Guide. You can work these into the discussion if they are points the students are not raising. Some of the statements do have quite a definite right or wrong. It may be tempting to use the questionnaire as a springboard for a lecture on these facts or truths, but please resist. The purpose of the exercise is first of all to get people talking with each other and expressing their opinions. When you offer facts or relevant information, try to do so without making those who chose the less accurate answer feel stupid. You could say, “In fact, this statement is not true, but lots of people think it is – let’s look at why.”
4. When a statement is clearly a stereotype, as in #3 or #6, or a myth, as in #4 or #12, take the opportunity to discuss what a stereotype or myth is and how it can influence what people think. During the discussion you might say, “Many of the attitudes we have about what people do may be based on myths or stereotypes that we have heard repeated over and over by the people around us. Sometimes when we look carefully at our own feelings, we find we no longer agree with those myths.”

## AMBIGUOUS QUESTIONNAIRE

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the statements below. You can use an 'A' for "Agree," or a 'D' for "Disagree."

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Men who beat women are mentally ill.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. When children are beaten, it is usually because they have been a behavior problem.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Most women nag too much.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Battering is found mainly among people of low income.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. A man can be pushed only so far before he explodes into violence.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. When children say they have been abused, they are often lying to get attention.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Kids who get picked on in school are usually getting what they deserve.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Blacks who move into white neighborhoods are looking for trouble.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. A man has a right to beat his wife or girlfriend if she is having an affair with someone else.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Most violent husbands or boyfriends drink too much.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. The main reason women stay with batterers is that they do not think they will have enough money to survive if they leave.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Men are abused by women as often as women by men, it is just not reported as much.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Parents who abuse their children were abused themselves as children.

## Discussion Guide for Ambiguous Questionnaire:

1. Studies project that battering occurs in anywhere from 25-50% of all marriages. If this statement were true, as many as one half of all married men would be classified as mentally ill. Some abusers may be mentally ill, but they are of no greater proportion among batterers than in the general population.
2. While much child abuse is passed over as “discipline”, surveys of children who live in abusive homes indicate that they usually try to keep conflict to a minimum by trying to please or pacify the abuser. They adjust to the abuser’s demands in order to avoid abuse. Children are often a handy and non-threatening target toward which the abuser can direct his or her violent response to his or her own problems. A parent whose child is a behavior problem still has no excuse for abusing that child.
3. Often women are perceived as “nagging” when they are merely trying to get a silent husband or boyfriend to discuss something. Batterers may blame their violent actions on the one they abused by saying that she provoked the abuse by nagging. Many teenagers experience their mothers as nagging them a lot. What puts women in that role?
4. Many people believe this, but it is not true. Among the men who have received counseling for battering are executives, psychologists, hairdressers and artists. Middle and upper class families may appear to be less violent because they are able to use their money in ways that will hide their problems and keep violent incidents secret. This is one of the most common myths about all forms of family violence. It often goes with another myth, that there is more family violence among people of color. These are both based on stereotypes that poor people and people of color are more violent.
5. While it is true that everyone has a “breaking point” where they become overwhelmed by frustration, anger, or stress, it is not true that everyone who reaches that point becomes violent. Some people cry, some drink, some tremble uncontrollably, some overeat, some get depressed. To say that when men reach such a point that they will inevitably become violent is to deny that men can make choices and be responsible for their behavior.
6. Accusing a child of lying about abuse is one way that adults deny guilt. In fact, children are much more likely to hide abuse than to make it up because they usually feel ashamed and in many cases have been threatened with dire consequences for themselves or their parents if they ever tell. Furthermore, in cases of sexual abuse, a young child would have no basis on which to make up a story of such sexual behavior if it were not happening to him or her.
7. “He’s asking for it” is often given as the reason for children picking on a peer. This is like saying a woman asked for abuse. It’s blaming the victim. If a kid is obnoxious to you, what are some other responses besides picking on him or her? Sometimes this “asking for it” is nothing more than being different in some way: having a different color skin or ethnic background, dressing differently, having a physical difference. We learn when we are very young – from television, movies, our friends, sometimes even our parents – to distrust and even mistreat those who are different from us. You might also remark



that when a child is picked on or abused at school there are some similarities to family violence: he or she is trapped (it's hard to leave school), he or she is often blamed, and there is the threat of it happening again.

8. As an extension of statement #7, this statement not only puts the blame for abuse back onto those who are being abused, but also expresses the racist attitude that those who are different do not deserve the same rights as others. It is important to show the relationship, and evolution, of this statement from #7. It also may be necessary to point out that many racist attitudes are "inherited" from what one hears repeatedly in his/her environment, and the importance of examining such attitudes closely and desiring to do one's own thinking.

9. The question is not whether or not the abused's behavior leads the man to violence, but if a man ever has a right to beat a woman. Questions of "ownership" in relationships, sexual jealousy, gender role double standard, and the need for communication in a relationship may easily be brought out through this discussion.

10. Often the same men who abuse their wives or girlfriends do also drink too much. Both reflect, in some measure, an inability to handle strong emotions or stress. But alcohol does not cause the violence and should not be used as it so often is, to explain or excuse it. You might point out that what alcohol does do is to lower your inhibitions and make you more likely to act on feelings you already have. Thus, as one battered woman said, "You know, he was angry and looking for a fight, so he went out and got loaded so he could come back, beat me up, and then say later that he didn't know what he was doing because he'd had too much to drink."

11. This is a major reason why women stay with batterers. The fewer job skills a woman has, the greater number of young children, and the distance between her earning power and her husband's all affect a battered woman's decision to stay or leave. Because of racism and sexism, women of color earn less than men of color and whites of either gender; therefore, women of color may have the fewest options if they are in a battering relationship.

12. There is very little data on numbers of abused men. One estimate is that there is one battered man for every 20 battered women, but that the abuse is more often verbal than physical. Some people argue that men are battered just as much, but would never report it for fear of appearing "weak." However, if men were battered as frequently as women, we would all be more aware of the problem. Men do get assaulted by their partners, but because they are often physically stronger, socialized to be more independent, and because usually they are not primary caretakers of their children, they are less likely to get trapped in an abusive relationship.

13. There does seem to be a generational pattern in child abuse cases. Frequently adults who abuse, neglect or sexually abuse their children and stepchildren were treated in similar ways as children themselves, and never received any help in dealing with the deep-seated feelings of shame, distrust, worthlessness and anger which repeated child abuse engenders.

## UNIT II: CHILD ABUSE

### ACTIVITIES

What Do You Know?	10 minutes
Child Abuse Information Sheet	20 minutes
Imagine You Are Stephen (case study)	20 minutes
Portrait of Sally (family history)	20 minutes
Tough Spot (guided childhood memory)	15 minutes
How Could You Handle It? (Problem Solving)	20 minutes

### OPTIONAL SPEAKERS:

- Adult who was abused as a child.
- A foster parent.
- Social worker from Department of Social Services.
- A member of Parents Anonymous.

### OVERVIEW

Child abuse seems to be on the increase. Even though it was the first type of family violence to receive widespread public attention (followed by battering, and, most recently, child sexual abuse), and most states have laws which specifically prohibit it, the problem has not been alleviated. Lack of economic and social supports for parents, lack of respect for and understanding of children, and the fact that it tends to perpetuate itself from generation to generation all contribute to the prevalence of child abuse.

To help participants better understand child abuse, particularly its cyclical nature, this unit asks them to identify with a child victim, then with an abusive parent, and finally to think of themselves as nurturing, rather than abusing parents. Answers to basic questions about child abuse are provided in the form of an Information Sheet to be handed out and discussed. As teacher/facilitator, you might want to read this fact sheet, and the discussion guide which accompanies it, before beginning the unit.

For additional materials on child abuse, see "Resources," page 130 .

## **Activity A: What Do You Know. . .**

### **Purpose:**

To provide an introduction to child abuse based on participants' information and experience.

### **Description of Activity:**

1. Have participants write down one thing they know (or think or have heard) about child abuse.
2. Have each participant read what she/he has written OR collect the comments and read them back to the group. Choose whichever method you think will be more comfortable for young people you are working with.
3. Comments will range from the very general ("It's bad") to the more specific ("Teachers have to report it"). Personal experience may surface indirectly. If the comments provoke discussion, allow five or ten minutes for it, without worrying about focusing too much.
4. Lead into the Child Abuse Information Sheet by saying "We all know something about child abuse and are disturbed by it. Let's look at this information sheet on child abuse to see what more we can learn."

## **Activity B: Child Abuse Information Sheet**

### **Purpose:**

To answer basic questions about child abuse and provide a framework for discussion.

### **Description of Activity:**

1. Duplicate and hand out attached Child Abuse Information Sheet.
2. Go over the Information Sheet slowly, stopping after each section for questions and comments:
  - Relate the information back to responses from the previous exercise:  
“This seems to be different from what many of us thought.”
  - Make connections with discussion that occurred during the first unit:  
“Do you remember when we did the Human Graph exercise how many people felt that emotional abuse was often more harmful than physical abuse?”
  - Ask for and supply examples whenever possible.



## CHILD ABUSE INFORMATION SHEET

Note: This fact sheet does not include information on child sexual abuse, even though it is one type of child abuse. There is a separate information sheet just on child sexual abuse.

### WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

It is physical abuse . . . beating, kicking, burning, shaking, throwing the child.

It is emotional abuse . . . consistently telling a child that he or she is rotten, stupid, worthless or unloved.

It is physical neglect . . . consistently failing to provide food, clothing, shelter, medical care or supervision for a child.

It is emotional neglect . . . giving the child no love, attention, affection or support.

### HOW OFTEN DOES IT OCCUR?

Nationally: Child abuse is on the increase. It has doubled in the last eight years. Currently some 1.4 million children are victims of severe abuse and neglect each year.

In Massachusetts:

- . . . every day, 90 children are involved in reports of possible abuse
- . . . in one year (1983) 32,640 children were involved in reports of possible abuse
- . . . one-third to one-half of all cases never get reported.

### WHO GETS ABUSED?

Both boys and girls, of all ages. Often only one child in a family gets abused. The parents think of that child as different, or more trouble, or abnormal, even though the child may be perfectly normal.

### WHO DOES THE ABUSING?

Mothers, fathers, stepparents, guardians, caretakers. Abusers come from all social classes and from different racial and ethnic groups.

### WHY DO PARENTS AND GUARDIANS ABUSE THEIR CHILDREN?

There is no one answer to this. Some partial answer are:

- . . . they may have been abused or neglected as children.
- . . . they have unrealistic expectations for the child.
- . . . they are totally occupied with their own needs.
- . . . they have a lot of stress in their lives which they do not cope with well.
- . . . they are isolated, without close friends and other supports.

**WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DISCIPLINE AND ABUSE?**

Discipline comes from trying to change a child's behavior. Forms of discipline include yelling at a child to stop, an occasional spanking, taking something away from a child for a short time (a toy, the right to go out, etc.). Abuse comes from the hostility or conflict the parent is feeling, more than from something the child is doing. It is very severe and it is ongoing.

One test of the difference: check the child an hour later. If s/he still has a mark, that is abuse.

**WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SIGNS WHEN A CHILD IS ABUSED?**

<u>Physical Signs Of Abuse</u>	<u>Physical Signs Of Neglect</u>	<u>Behaviors</u>
bruises	underweight	frightened of adults
burns	listless	very needy of attention
other skin markings	needs medical care	depressed or withdrawn
injured parts of the body	repeated accidents (due to lack of supervision)	problems in school
	inappropriately dressed	problems getting along with other kids

**DO CHILDREN LIE ABOUT ABUSE?** They very seldom say it is happening, when it isn't. They may however deny being abused, even when they are, out of fear of revenge from the abusing parent or to protect the abusing parent.

**WHAT CAN I DO IF I THINK A CHILD I KNOW IS BEING ABUSED?** Report it, even if you don't know for sure. Call the police department or in Massachusetts call the 24 hour hotline number of the Department of Social Services. If you feel uncomfortable making the call, discuss your suspicions with an adult you trust and have that person report.

## Discussion Guide for Child Abuse Information Sheet:

**Child sexual abuse:** Reiterate that child sexual abuse is also a type of child abuse. Explain that participants will be learning more about child sexual abuse after focusing on these other forms of child abuse.

**How often it occurs:** Several explanations have been offered for the increase in child abuse over the last ten years. One is economic. Children, the most vulnerable members of our society, are often targets of abuse when their parents are in despair about their lives. Recession, inflation and unemployment can cause stress which pushes parents beyond their emotional limits, especially when coupled, as they have been under the Reagan administration, with massive cuts in the social services designed to soften the impact of these economic hardships.

Another explanation for the increase is more sociological. Divorce and remarriage, which have been increasing, have created “blended families” with new difficulties. Parents are living with children who they have not raised since infancy or really chosen to raise.

**Who gets abused:** Younger children are slightly more vulnerable than teenagers because as children get older, parents fear they may reveal the abuse and because they are more able to remove themselves from the situation. Many teenage runaways are abuse victims. However, running away often puts young people in jeopardy of new forms of abuse.

**Who does the abusing:** In cases of severe physical abuse, men are more likely to be the abusers, though women are also perpetrators of both physical and emotional abuse. In two-parent families, both parents are involved in the abuse, even though only one parent may be abusive. Being afraid of her husband, or being afraid of what it would be like without him around, may prevent a wife from intervening when the husband is being abusive to the children. Lack of emotional or financial support from a husband may be a factor contributing to a wife’s abusiveness. Thus while only one caretaker is abusive or neglectful, the other, for a variety of reasons, allows the abuse to occur.

A common myth is that child abuse (and woman abuse) happens only in poor households, in non-white households, among urban dwellers and among the uneducated. Statistics based on the number of reported cases are often misleading because under-reporting is especially prevalent in cases involving middle class and upper class families. Teachers, doctors, police officers and other likely reporters of child abuse have internalized this myth. They do not expect to see child abuse among the educated, professional, white families they encounter. They do not want to betray respected community members whom they view as peers and who may be colleagues. They do their best to ignore signs of abuse when they do occur, except in the most extreme cases when a child’s life is in danger.



**Why parents abuse their children:** The first three reasons listed on the information sheet characterize a situation in which a parent or parents have the potential to abuse. In cases of abuse, rather than neglect, this potential may remain in check until it is precipitated by a crisis or series of crises in the family's situation. These could include illness or death in the family, unemployment, change of job or residence, separation or divorce. To a parent who is not very stable or mature, this stress is enough to tip the balance. He or she can no longer cope and takes out frustration on the child.

In cases of chronic neglect, the parent is rarely intentionally abusive, but rather excessively occupied with his or her own needs. The parent may be dealing with serious mental or physical illness, problems in interpersonal relationships, or abuse of drugs or alcohol. Energy is directed inward and the child or children are largely ignored.

**The difference between discipline and abuse:** Some examples to help make this clear to participants are:

... A toddler is hitting another toddler over the head with a toy.

Discipline: the parent takes the toy away, saying that the child cannot play with it if s/he is going to hit the other child with the toy.

Abuse: The parent breaks and throws away all the child's toys.

... An eight year old never does his homework and is doing badly in school.

Discipline: The parent insists the child do his homework before he is allowed to watch any TV.

Abuse: The parent locks him in his room every evening.

**Do children lie:** See Discussion Guide for Ambiguous Questionnaire (Unit I. Activity D, #6).

**If you suspect child abuse is occurring:** Most states have clear procedures for reporting child abuse. The law in Massachusetts requires professionals, such as police officers, educators and medical personnel, who interact with children and families, to report all incidents of child abuse and neglect. Failure to report is punishable with a fine of up to \$1000. Anyone else can and is encouraged to report suspected child abuse, but only those designated mandated reporters are obligated to report.

Many people, including mandated reporters, are wary of reporting child abuse. They are afraid they may be dragged into court to testify, that they could be the object of a civil suit or that the person they are reporting will seek revenge in some way. They worry about causing trouble for the family, perhaps needlessly, or being responsible for the child being yanked out of his or her home. None of these fears are well founded. Reporters are not liable in any way. When reports are unsubstantiated, no complaints are lodged against the family. Except in real emergency situations, children are not removed from their homes. Besides, one's hesitations should always be weighed against the fact that by reporting you may be saving a child's life.



## **Activity C: Imagine you are Stephen**

### **Purpose:**

To help participants empathize with experiences and emotions of abused children.

### **Description of Activity:**

1. Duplicate the attached sheet, Imagine You Are Stephen.
2. Hand it out and read it aloud. Then ask participants to read it again to themselves and try to put themselves in Stephen's place. Ask them to answer the questions, stressing that there are no right answers and that you know they are just guessing.
3. While the group is doing the exercise, begin a chart on the board or on newsprint with five headings: feelings about stepfather; feelings about mother; feelings about school; feelings about yourself; and behavior in school.
4. Have students share their responses and write them on the board under the appropriate headings.
5. After Stephen's feelings have been shared and discussed, you can say: Stephen left home when he was 14 and went to live with his aunt and uncle. The abuse stopped. Now he's 24. Do you think he is still affected by it? In what ways?

**IMAGINE YOU ARE STEPHEN**

Imagine you are Stephen. You live in a small city with your mother, stepfather, half-brother and sister. Starting when you were about five, your stepfather used to beat you regularly with a belt whenever you did anything wrong, although he seldom touched your brother or sister. By the time you were nine, your mother started abusing you too. She once grabbed you by the hair, and ran, pulling you down the hall simply for looking for something in the refrigerator. There was seldom a week when you didn't have bruises or welts on your body. And every morning as your mother sent you off to school, she would tell you that she was going to kill herself before you came home and that you would find her there, lying in blood on the floor. Several times you tried kind of indirectly to let a teacher know what was happening, and were told that all kids have trouble at home, that your parents really loved you and that you should try to understand them better.

**How would you feel about your stepfather?**

**How would you feel about your mother?**

**Would you like going to school?**

**How would you act at school?**

**How would you feel about yourself?**

## Discussion Guide for “Imagine You Are Stephen”:

**Feelings about parents:** All the feelings participants have named are probably “right.” Abused children have a range of sharply contradictory emotions about their parents. They love them and hate them. They are terrified of them, yet terrified that something will happen to them.

**Feelings about and behavior in school:** School can be and is a haven for many abused children. In fact, one indicator for both physical and sexual abuse that teachers are taught to look for is a child’s unwillingness to leave school. And teachers are often the first adults an abused child will confide in. On the other hand, because of the abuse at home, many abused children have a hard time in school, get in trouble there, and end up being verbally abused at school almost as much as they are at home. They may have trouble concentrating, demand attention in disruptive ways, and argue or fight a lot with both teachers and other students. They may get labelled as stupid or as troublemakers. In these cases, school experiences only confirm for them their feelings of inadequacy and make them even more distrustful of adults.

If you are discussing this in a school setting, share with students any information you have about how the school has handled abuse cases that have come to its attention. Try to find out how many cases of abuse the school has reported in a given year and what the standard procedure for reporting cases is. Share this information with the students.

**Feelings about yourself:** Abused children never feel good about themselves. They believe they are bad, rotten, stupid, worthless. They feel lonely, distrustful, unloveable and unloved.

**The after-effects:** There is ample evidence to suggest that violence perpetuates itself. In one study, 100 juvenile offenders who had assaulted others were interviewed. Eighty percent had a history of being physically abused by their parents. In another study of the male inmate population in a California prison (San Quentin) over 90% of the inmates had been abused as children. And abused children may well become abusive parents. As one woman explained, “Every time I looked in the mirror, I saw my mother, and my hatred for her and for myself got mixed up. When this happened, I’d call my little boy in from the backyard and pick a fight with him, so I’d have an excuse to whip him. I even used my mother’s old standard – grabbing him by the ankles and turning him upside down and shaking him.”

## **Activity D: Portrait of Sally . . . A Case History**

### **Purpose:**

To show how child abuse can perpetuate itself from one generation to the next; to expose participants to sources of support for potentially abusive parents.

### **Background:**

Portrait of Sally is a fictitious case history based on a composite of real cases provided by a school adjustment counselor. As Portrait of Sally suggests, one is frequently able to trace child abuse down through three or four generations. And it is not at all unusual for a school system to be working with a troubled teenager, and then, three years later, to be called upon to provide special education services for that teenager's abused child.

### **Description of Activity:**

1. To introduce the activity you can say: Something we all want to know more about is why parents abuse their children. We have talked some about how people who abuse their children may have been abused themselves when they were children. You are going to hear a story today about Sally which will show you how child abuse does sometimes pass from one generation to the next.
2. Duplicate and hand out "Portrait of Sally." Read it aloud with participants.
3. Try to cover the following questions in discussing the case study:
  - How did the story make you feel?
  - What was the worst thing that happened to Sally while she was growing up?
  - What might have prevented Sally from abusing her child?
  - Do you know anybody who has had experiences like Sally's?

The discussion guide suggests points to incorporate into your discussion.



## PORTRAIT OF SALLY

Both of Sally's parents were emotionally neglected and verbally abused as children. When Sally was born, they weren't prepared for the demands she made on their time and patience. They felt cheated because she was not the "perfect" baby they had assumed she would be. They would shake her when she cried to make her stop crying, but she would only cry more. They began to physically abuse her regularly.

Sally was placed in a foster home at the age of six. She went into another foster home when she was six and a half. This was going pretty well; she liked it there and they liked her. But then her foster family moved and she was returned to her parents. For the first few months, they were very careful with her, and she with them. But then the abuse started again. When she was eight, she put in a third foster home. This was a real family for her. There was another girl in the family, just a little younger than Sally whom she considered her sister. She was doing better in school. But then when she was ill, her foster parents started going through a divorce. She was very upset by this and wondered if she was not somehow responsible. They felt that with the change in their relationship they could not continue being foster parents.

So Sally went back home again. This time she was 12. And her mother had left her father. Sally and her mother got closer and they were developing a pretty good mother/daughter relationship. Sally got very involved with her friends at school and for the first time really felt herself part of a group.

When Sally was 13, her mother's boyfriend came over one night before her mother got home from work. He tried to rape her. She got away and ran out. But something snapped in her. All her hurt and anger came out, and she began lashing out at all adults, including her mother and her teachers at school. She started drinking and taking drugs and cutting school.

Eventually she married her boyfriend, because: "Nobody else cared about me." When she was 18, she gave birth to a baby boy, whom she named Billy.

Three years later, the school system Sally had gone through got a call. Billy Smith needed an intensive, therapeutic nursery school. Billy was malnourished, neglected and beaten.

In those three years, Sally's husband had just walked out on her one day. Billy had been a colicky baby and Sally would spank him when he cried, and then beat him when he kept on crying. She had no idea how to take care of a baby and didn't know who to turn to. Her mother, at this point, was living in another state and out of contact with Sally.

Now Billy, at the age of 3, is in a foster home. He is doing better and has fits of rage less and less often. But he needs a special nursery school program and it may be years, if ever, before he recovers.

### **Discussion Guide for “Portrait of Sally”:**

**The worst thing that happened to Sally:** There’s no way to pinpoint a single event or crisis which was most traumatic for Sally. This question is designed to encourage participants to think about what is hard for children and teenagers and why. There will hopefully be some disagreement among the group as to which crisis (the divorce, the attempted rape, having a child) was worst and you can use those differences of opinion to provoke further discussion.

**What might have prevented Sally from abusing her child:** Overall, Sally needed a support system of family, friends, social service agencies. One specific thing that might have helped her would have been a course on parenting offered at her high school or in the hospital where she had the baby. Like some abusive parents, especially young ones, Sally knew nothing about what was normal behavior for a baby. No one had helped her anticipate and think about the frustrations and stress inherent in raising children, especially as a single parent. Another option would have been joining one of the many young parent or single parent programs being offered now out of schools and community mental health centers.

Knowing about and utilizing programs for abusive parents would have helped too. Parents Anonymous, a confidential self-help program for parents who abuse (or are afraid of abusing) their children, has chapters throughout the country, even in smaller communities. Modeled on the very successful Alcoholics Anonymous, it has proven effective in helping parents change the ways they react to their children. Other programs for abusive parents can be identified by looking under “Child Abuse” in the phone directory.

**Experiences like Sally’s:** Participants are likely to answer this at first by recalling TV programs and movies. That is fine, but the answers will tend to digress; “Do you remember that movie where the kid had been stuffed in a closet for six months?” After a few minutes, encourage the group to respond based on more personal experiences. In preparation for this, make sure to reread “Responding When Students Reveal “Direct Experiences with Abuse” page 13 of the Introduction.

## Activity E: “Tough Spot” . . . A Guided Memory

### **Purpose:**

To help participants think about how adults can support children by remembering something they wanted from an adult when they were in a “tough spot” as a child.

### **Description of Activity:**

1. To introduce the activity you can say: Many of you will be parents or caretakers of children some day. One of the things which will help you be a better parent is to be sensitive to what your child needs from you, particularly when that child is having a tough time. Here you are going to be asked to remember something you needed from a parent when you were a child. If you can remember what you needed, maybe as a parent, you will better understand what your child needs.
2. Divide students into pairs and have them move, if necessary, so they are sitting next to their partners. Explain that after the memory exercise, they will share those memories with their partners.
3. Ask students to relax and be silent. When the room has been quiet for a minute, begin the guided memory which follows. Read it slowly, in a quiet voice. The dots indicate places where you should pause.

Close your eyes . . . Think about the ocean, stretching out to the horizon . . . Clear your mind of all other images . . . Just think about the blues and greys of the ocean . . . Now, remember yourself as a child . . . Where did you live? . . . Who did you live with? . . . Were they nice to you? . . . What did you like to do? . . . Now remember some tough spot, some hard situation, you were in . . . What was happening? . . . Were you scared? . . . Hurt? . . . What did you need a grownup to help you with? . . . What did you need them for? . . . Try to remember what you wanted from them . . . Now you can open your eyes.
4. Tell participants they have five to ten minutes to share with their partners what the tough spot was and what they wanted from their parent(s) or other adults close by.
5. Call students back together when they seem finished. To summarize you can ask: What do children need or want from adults?

## **Activity F: How Could You Handle it?**

### **Purpose:**

To remind participants of distinctions between discipline and abuse; to show that what is frustrating for parents is often perfectly normal, predictable behavior for children; to suggest positive ways of parenting; to build problem solving skills.

### **Description of Activity:**

1. Review your discussion of the differences between discipline and abuse (from the Child Abuse Information Sheet, Activity B).
2. Tell participants that their task is to come up with non-abusive solutions for the parenting problems presented in the cases you are going to read.
3. Duplicate and hand out the attached hypotheticals. Read them aloud.
4. Pair off students and ask them to share their solutions with their partner. Explain that when you re-group, each partner will be responsible for presenting the other person's solutions and his or her reasoning process. (This encourages listening, makes the process of sharing less threatening for some, and gives each person a new perspective on his or her own ideas.)
5. Give the pairs about five minutes of talking/listening time. Then call the group back together, and go around, with each person presenting his or her partner's parenting solutions.
6. To summarize, point out any patterns that have emerged. Then, you can ask:
  - Were any of the solutions abusive ones?
  - Is discipline appropriate for Sean?
  - Would any of the solutions suggested make both Julie and her father happy?



## HOW COULD YOU HANDLE IT?

#1. You've been home alone all day with your daughter, Lisa, who is six, has a fever and is cranky, and with your son, Sean, who is three. You're tired of getting things for Lisa, and picking up after Sean. You've already picked his toys up off the living room floor three times and now, a half an hour later, you can barely get into the room. You feel yourself getting a headache, so you decide to lie down and take a nap. Lisa is finally napping herself, and you put Sean in front of the TV, turn it on, and tell him not to bother you, that you're going to sleep for a while.

The phone wakes you up fifteen minutes later. You're groggy and annoyed because it was the wrong number. You decide you'd better start supper. When you go into the kitchen you see the refrigerator door wide open, there is a milk carton on the floor and milk is slowly oozing out all over the place, and there are Cheerios spilled everywhere. You are furious. You know Sean must be responsible for the mess. You yell for him to come, but there's no answer. When you go looking for him, you find him in Lisa's room, curled up on the bed, asleep beside a pile of Cheerios.

#2. Your 13 year old daughter Julie is not supposed to have friends over after school while you are at work. One day you come home early, at 5:30 instead of your usual 6:00. It's quiet when you come in, but then you hear laughing coming from upstairs. You smell cigarette smoke. You realize that Julie isn't alone and start getting mad. You go up to her room and go in. Julie's there with her friend Mona, and two boys you don't know. You notice two empty beer bottles on the floor.

### UNIT III: CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

#### ACTIVITIES:

Student Definitions and Explanations	10 minutes
Child Sexual Abuse Information Sheet	20 minutes
What It Was Like to be an Incest Victim	20 minutes
Ruth's Story or Film: "No More Secrets"	15-30 minutes
Incest Attitude Form	45 minutes

#### OPTIONAL SPEAKERS:

- Counselor who works with offenders
- Member of an incest survivor's support group

#### OVERVIEW

Eighty-five percent of all children who are sexually abused are abused by family members, close family friends, or acquaintances. The overwhelming majority of perpetrators are male, although boys as well as girls are victims. The focus in this unit is on male-perpetrated incest, defined as tricked or forced sexual contact between a child and an adult family member, stepparent or guardian.

For the victim, incest is usually the most traumatic form of child sexual abuse, even when, as is often the case, little physical violence is involved. For a child who is sexually abused by a stranger, the episode usually happens only once, it does not happen at home, and the child can often turn to a parent for comfort or support. For a child sexually abused by a father or father figure, the abuse usually reoccurs over several years, it takes place in what should be a safe place for the child – his/her home – and it is not at all clear that the mother can or will help the child. There is no doubt that incest has devastating, long-term effects on victims, including depression, suicide, absence of healthy sexual relationships, and various forms of self-destructive behavior.

Child sexual abuse is a much harder topic to discuss than child abuse because sex itself is such an uncomfortable subject, especially for adolescents. Yet it is crucial for victims of sexual abuse to talk about what has happened or is currently happening to them. There may be someone in the group who has been sexually abused and never told anyone. There may also be some students who have friends in this situation. An underlying objective of this unit is to make it possible for students to seek help themselves or be helpers if they have friends or relatives in a sexual abuse situation.

To this end, participants are asked to consider and share their feelings at many points throughout the unit. A technique is begun here, which is replicated in succeeding units, in which participants are given index cards and instructed to write down their feelings after being exposed to what may be upsetting material. They can then share these feelings with the group, hand in the cards to the teacher/facilitator, signed or unsigned, or keep them private if they wish.

Because the focus in this unit and the one which follows is on men being violent to women, young men in your group may feel uncomfortable or defensive. Sometimes acknowledging that it must be hard for them and giving them space to talk about their feelings will help. You might also want to reread the section in the Introduction entitled "Creating Entry Points for Boys," page 13.

A movie about incest, "Something about Amelia" was aired nationwide on TV in the fall of 1983. You might see whether the school media center (or a friend) has a tape of that movie. It was well done, many teenagers saw it and liked it, and it would be very appropriate to show and discuss in this unit.

There are several curricula which focus exclusively on sexual abuse prevention, geared towards adolescents. If you are interested in expanding this unit, you might want to look at the Illusion Theater's No Easy Answers (See "Resources" Page 130).

## **Activity A: Definitions and Explanations**

### **Purpose:**

To give the group and the teacher/facilitator a sense of what participants already know and think about child sexual abuse.

### **Description of Activity:**

1. Write on the board or on newsprint, or mimeograph on a sheet:  
Sexual abuse of children is . . .  
Incest is . . .  
Child sexual abuse happens because . . .
2. Ask students to fill in the blanks. Assure them you do not expect legal or formal definitions.
3. Go around the room, having each person read what she/he has written OR collect the papers and read them off to yourself. Choose whichever method seems best for your particular group.
4. Do not evaluate student responses. Just acknowledge that there is a range of ideas and definitions, and note privately misconceptions you want to address later.
5. Lead into the Child Sexual Abuse Information Sheet by saying: Let us look at this information sheet and see how child sexual abuse is defined and explained here.



## **Activity B: Child Sexual Abuse Information Sheet**

### **Purpose:**

To dispel myths and answer basic questions about child sexual abuse; to provide a framework for discussion.

### **Description of Activity:**

1. Duplicate and hand out attached Child Sexual Abuse Information Sheet.
2. As with the child abuse fact sheet, go over the information slowly, stopping after each section for questions and using the Discussion Guide for additional information. In general, try to refer back to the previous activity when you come to the definition and explanation sections, and make connections with what students discussed and learned about child abuse in the previous unit.

## CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE INFORMATION SHEET

**WHAT IS CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE?** Tricked or forced sexual contact between a child and an adult (or much older child):

Including:

fondling  
oral sex  
anal sex  
intercourse

Including:

exposing  
obscene phone calls  
pornography  
verbal harrassment  
prostitution

When the perpetrator (offender) is a family member or caretaker to the child, this sexual abuse is called INCEST.

**HOW OFTEN DOES IT OCCUR?** Approximately one out of five girls and one out of ten boys are sexually abused.

**WHO GETS ABUSED?** Boys and girls of all ages. Girls are more at risk than boys; younger children (under 12) are slightly more at risk than older children. Often the abuse involves several children in the same family, but begins with the oldest daughter.

**WHO DOES IT?** The overwhelming majority of perpetrators are heterosexual men. 80% to 90% are related to or know the children they abuse. They come from all social classes and racial and ethnic backgrounds.

**WHY DO THEY DO IT?** There is no one answer. Some reasons may be:

- perpetrator was abused as a child  
(physically, emotionally or sexually).
- perpetrator is acting out power, anger or aggression issues.
- perpetrator thinks only of himself and refuses to see the child's feelings or damage to the child.
- social messages, media and pornography give people the message that there is nothing wrong with forcing or tricking people into sex and that victims really like it.

**HOW DO THEY GET AWAY WITH IT?** By bribing or threatening a child into secrecy. More than half of all sexually abused children never reveal it even to a parent. About 90% of all sexual abuse is never reported to the authorities.

## WHAT ARE SOME SIGNS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE?

### Physical signs

pain in genital area  
loss of appetite  
VD  
pregnancy

### Behaviors You Might Notice

running away  
suicidal gestures  
avoiding physical activities  
(like gym)  
avoidance of home  
nightmares or insomnia  
frequent sexual references  
hints about problems at home  
problems in school

## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SUSPECT A CHILD IS BEING SEXUALLY ABUSED?

Believe the child. Report it. In Massachusetts, call the 24 hour hotline number of the Department of Social Services: In other states call your local police department and ask how to report it. Or report it at the school the child attends.

## **Discussion Guide for Child Sexual Abuse Information Sheet:**

**Definition:** Note that the definition of child sexual abuse is broader than the group may have suspected. Although every state has its own legal definition of what constitutes child sexual abuse and incest, there is a general move throughout the country to broaden these definitions. Child exploitation like prostitution and pornography are being recognized as forms of sexual abuse; caretakers, guardians and stepparents are being included along with blood relatives in the definition of incest. To help students internalize this broader definition, you might ask questions like, “Does it surprise you to think of obscene phone calls as sexual abuse?” Be aware that as a result of this discussion, group members may be newly identifying themselves as victims of sexual abuse.

**How Often It Occurs:** This estimate is based on the kind of broad definition of child sexual abuse given on the information sheet. It is based on estimates of incidence of abuse, not number of cases reported.

**Who Does It:** Several myths surface here. Reread the Myths section of the Introduction, page 11, for a discussion of the myths that abusers are all from one socioeconomic class and that they are usually strangers. One myth unique to child sexual abuse is the assumption that men who sexually abuse male children are homosexuals. All evidence points to the contrary. Studies indicate that well over 90% of all male perpetrators are heterosexual.

For discussion, ask students whether they think it would be worse to be sexually assaulted by a stranger or sexually abused by a family member. Remind them that incest involves all the dynamics of abuse discussed in Unit I (threat of reoccurrence, violation of trust, greater amount of victim blaming, and being emotionally and physically trapped in the situation).

**Why do they do it:** We focus on fathers or father figures here (in other words, on incest) because this is a very common form of child sexual abuse and is particularly devastating to the child.

Other than the reasons listed, there are varying theories. One is that incest can be seen as an extension of patriarchy, with men viewing their wives and children as their property, rather than as equals. It is similar to battering in this respect. In many incest families, the mother is unable or unwilling to protect the child. She may be ill, overburdened with other children, afraid of her husband or boyfriend. She may unconsciously condone the incest, because she is relieved not to be the focus of so many demands from her partner. Or, and this is very common, she may be afraid to admit it is happening because she does not want to have to dissolve the relationship. Mothers as well as fathers often join in accusing the child of lying when she/he reveals incest.



**How do they get away with it:** Children are very vulnerable to threats and bribes. They are easily intimidated by and scared of adults and they often believe what they are told. A common threat in incest cases involves the abusive parent himself — “I will go to jail and you will never see me again if you tell” — and plays on the child’s emotional attachment to the father. Another common threat is “no one will ever believe you if you tell; — and plays on the child’s emotional attachment to the father. Another common threat is “no one will ever believe you if you tell; they’ll think you are crazy and take you away.” For discussion, ask participants to relate experiences with older siblings or neighborhood kids in which they were told, “You had better not tell or I will . . .” Point out that the most important thing a child victim can do is to tell someone he or she trusts about the abuse.

**What should I do:** For more information on reporting, see the Discussion Guide for the Child Abuse Information Sheet, Unit II, page 33.

## **Activity C: “What It Was Like To Be An Incest Victim”**

### **Purpose:**

To show vividly the nature of incest by exposing participants to a first person account of incest, written by a 13 year old girl.

### **Background:**

First person testimony is a very effective way to help young people understand a topic like incest. The attached story, from a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services publication, is gripping and disturbing. It is included because it portrays so accurately what many incest victims feel both during and after the abuse.

### **Description of Activity:**

1. Introduce the story by reminding students that most children are sexually abused by someone in their family or someone they know. Father/daughter incest, like that described in the first hand account is one of the most common forms of child sexual abuse. Acknowledge that the story may be disturbing to some because it is so real — a real teenager, telling her own story in her own words. Assure students they will have plenty of time to discuss their reactions.
2. Hand out index cards, explaining that after hearing the story, they should write down how it made them feel. Assure them of privacy: they do not have to write their names on the cards and they do not have to hand them in if they do not want to.
3. Duplicate and distribute the story if possible. Then read it aloud together. Before beginning discussion, give participants time to jot down responses on their cards.
4. Questions to try to cover in the discussion include:
  - How did the story make you feel?
  - Why did she feel ashamed?
  - What do you think drinking had to do with her father’s actions?
  - Was telling her counselor at school a positive thing to do?
  - How does she feel about being in a foster home? Is she better off, do you think?
  - Do you think she’ll continue to “hate men?”

See the Discussion Guide for information relevant to these questions.

5. When the discussion is finished, collect the cards that students are willing to share. These written comments will help you gauge how openly feelings are being expressed and may alert you to the fact there are victims in your group.

## WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO BE AN INCEST VICTIM

## Anonymous

I am thirteen years old. I was eleven the first time it happened. My mother was out, but the other kids were upstairs. It was evening. My father had been out drinking. I was in bed. He'd been kind of feeling around before that. I didn't like it. I felt ashamed. That first time, he came in and started feeling under my pajamas. I was half asleep and didn't know what was happening. He was drunk, and, when he's drunk, he's scary. Before I knew it, he was on top of me, and I kept telling him no, but he said he'd hurt me if I didn't do it. I told him I didn't want to, but he said yes, I'd like it, and he was just showing me how. I didn't like it. It hurt. He was dirty. I don't remember much about it really. I don't want to.

He told me not to tell my mother. But then, he did it again and again. I didn't know what to do. He came in maybe once or twice a week. Sometimes, he'd come right from my mother. I could hear them, and then he'd come in and make me do it. I don't know why I let it go on so long. I feel ashamed. I was so scared, and I was afraid someone would find out. I got really withdrawn and down. My school work was okay, but I didn't make any friends. I just worried all the time.

It was two years before I couldn't stand it any longer, and I told my mother. She told me to tell her if it happened again. I told her it had been going on for a long time, and she got mad. She and my father called me a whore. My mother didn't seem to care. Finally, I just had to do something, and I told my counselor at school. She took me to the police. There was this man there . . . I was supposed to talk to a woman, but she wasn't there, and I had to tell all this to the policeman. I was scared. Later, I had to go to a doctor. He got me on this table and used that cold thing. It was awful . . . worse than the stuff with my father. I didn't know anything about sex. My mother never told me, and I never had a boyfriend or anything. I still wonder. I worried about getting pregnant; I knew enough to know I could. I still don't know why I didn't. The doctor said I wouldn't.

Now, I live in a foster home. I was glad to get away from both my mother and my father. The worst part of it was that after I did tell about it, it seemed like it was my fault. Sometimes, I think it was. Why didn't I stop it? I used to get extra things from my father for being so nice to him. But it wasn't worth it. I never care about seeing him again. My mother doesn't want to leave my dad. I don't think she's happy with him, but she's too scared to be on her own. That's one reason I'd like to go back home, so I could help her. But I don't know if she really wants me. She didn't seem to care what was happening to me at all. She just blamed me for everything. I think she needs some counseling too.

I like it in this foster home. They're really nice here. My dad never used to let me go out. I was only supposed to go to school, go home, and work. Now, I get to go out with the other girls at school; we go rollerskating and stuff, and it's fun. But I still flinch if a man touches me. I hate men. Men are dirty; all they want is sex. I'll never marry. I'll adopt children. I like kids.

In fact, that's one of the things that bothers me a lot. I miss my little brothers and sister, and I know they miss me. I worry about them and feel bad that I'm not home to take care of them. When dad drinks, he gets really mean with them. He hits them with the belt. I want him to get treatment. I don't want him to go to jail. But I don't feel bad about reporting him. I just couldn't stand it anymore. And besides, I'm worried about my sisters. I think he might try something with them, too.



### **Discussion Guide for What It Was Like:**

**Shame:** Victims of incest often feel ashamed because even very young children know there is something wrong with what is happening (after all, they are told to keep it a secret). They feel ashamed of themselves for not preventing it or reporting it sooner. They feel ashamed because they may like the special attention they are getting and in some cases get pleasure from the sexual stimulation. And generally they feel ashamed of their bodies – dirty, violated, and sure that anyone who looks at them will know their secret.

**Alcohol and Sexual Abuse:** There is often an association between intoxication and incestuous incidents, as there is with intoxication and physical abuse of both women and children. In neither case however does drinking cause the abuse nor should it be considered a legitimate excuse for the abuse.

**Long-term Effects:** Long-term effects of child sexual abuse include difficulty in having satisfying sexual relationships, suicidal feelings, and feeling of being permanently stigmatized or marked, self-destructive actions (abusing drugs, alcohol, food, etc.). There is no doubt that in many cases the abuse influences the behavior and feelings of the victim for the rest of his or her life.

## **Activity D: Ruth's Story or Film: "No More Secrets"**

### **Purpose:**

To deepen understanding of incest; to look at models of how to say No and how to support your friends (film); to practice problem-solving around sexual abuse issues (story).

### **Background:**

"Ruth's Story," included here, is a vignette about a 10 year old who is abused by her stepfather. She likes his attention and affection, but is troubled by the way he touches her and wants it to stop. She is not sure what to do.

"No More Secrets" is a 13 minute, live action and animated film, in which a group of friends, boys and girls, ages 9-11, exchange uneasy confidences about personal experiences with sexual abuse at the hands of an older brother, a father and an uncle. Animated sections depict the abuse in an explicit, but not alarming way. The children speculate about possible solutions and support each other in deciding to speak up and seek help. Although the film is geared for children age 10-13, the role model it presents of how to say "No" and the importance of support from friends is very useful for teenagers.

See "Resources," page 130 , for how to obtain "No More Secrets."

### **Description of Activity:**

#### **A. Ruth's Story**

1. To introduce the activity you can say: As you saw in the last story, children who experience incest have particular trouble knowing who to turn to because often they do not get much help from either parent. After reading this story, we will discuss Ruth's different options.

2. Read aloud "Ruth's Story." If possible, give students their own copies as well.

3. Questions for discussion include:

- How did the story make you feel?
- How does Ruth feel about Tom, her stepfather?

Here you should focus on the different feelings Ruth has about Tom. Contrast Ruth's feelings with those of the victim in the previous account. Note that incest, unlike child physical abuse, sometimes involves special attention and affection, not violence. Children who are incest victims are particularly torn between liking the perpetrator, but not liking his behavior. To help participants understand this, you might extract from the story all the reasons Ruth likes Tom and list those on the board or on newsprint. If there is any tendency on the part of the group to blame her ("Well, she sat on his lap, didn't she?"), reinforce the idea that incest is NEVER the victim's fault.

- Have you ever liked someone, but not liked something he or she did to you?
- How is Tom's behavior affecting her?
- What can Ruth do?

She could talk to a teacher, her mother, Tom, the police, run away, try to avoid Tom. As participants offer various suggestions of what Ruth could do, ask them to guess at what would happen next and how Ruth would feel. The answers will be speculation, of course, but will help participants realize that there are no clear and easy solutions to incest. Ruth's mother might or might not believe her; she might kick Tom out, but she probably would not. If Ruth told Tom she did not ever want to be touched like that or to sit on his lap again, he might stop, or he might start to bribe or threaten her.

Ruth might decide to keep it a secret and just avoid Tom whenever possible, as many incest victims do. In that case, you can predict that the abuse would continue and probably escalate. At the end, see if the group can come to some consensus about her best option.

#### B. "No More Secrets"

1. Introduce the film using information included in the Background for Teacher/Facilitator section of the activity.
2. Hand out index cards, using the same procedure as in Activity C.
3. Show the film and allow a little time for students to write down responses.
4. Questions for discussion include:
  - How did the film make you feel?
  - Which of the children in it did you relate to the most?
  - What were some of the feelings the children had about the relatives who were abusing them?
  - How did friends help each other in this movie?

Sympathetic friends can be crucial sources of support for victims of child sexual abuse. The friends in the film were incredibly (perhaps unrealistically) supportive of each other: they listened, they believed, they did not judge. Point out to participants that they all can be similar kinds of friends.

- Does saying "No" work?

Reinforce that saying "No" does not always work to prevent abuse. However, saying "No" can prevent the situation from becoming more confusing and complicated because the victim knows, at least, that he or she has tried to make it stop. Point out that you may have to say "No" more than once. And that if "No" doesn't work, then you should try to get away and find help.

You may also want to use questions from the instructional guide which accompanies the film.

## RUTH'S STORY

It's Saturday morning and just like many of her fifth grade friends, Ruth is sitting around her home watching Saturday morning cartoons. But the cartoons aren't very entertaining this morning because Ruth's mind is elsewhere . . .

Ruth and her mother had been living alone for about four years before Tom, her new stepfather, came along. Ruth's mother and father divorced when she was four years old. Her father lived in another town so she didn't see him much. Ruth knew her Mom had been lonely before Tom came along, and it had seemed that she was always worried about money. But Tom seemed to make her Mom so happy, and he had a very good job.

Ruth wasn't too sure about someone new joining her family at first, but Tom was very nice to her and he seemed to like her very much. They had even begun to give each other a big hug before bedtime every night. This had felt very good and even Tom wanting her to sit on his lap at night while they watched television seemed nice. She noticed that this happened more often when Mom was gone, but it wasn't until Tom tried to touch her on a part of her body that she thought was really private that she became very confused. Ruth really liked the feeling that someone cared for her, and Tom made her feel grownup sometimes, but she was sure she wasn't feeling good about his touching.

Ruth didn't quite know how to tell her Mom or even if she should tell her about these worries, but she tried one day by asking if her Mom felt it was right for a big girl like her to be sitting on her stepfather's lap. But her Mom only said for her to be nice to Tom, especially after all he had done for them.

But as Ruth watched television this Saturday morning, she worried. She didn't feel like being nice to Tom because his bad touching continued. She wanted someone to help her, but how . . .



## **Activity E: Incest Attitude Form**

### **Purpose:**

To help participants examine different ideas about incest; to serve as a summary for the unit.

### **Background:**

Like the Ambiguous Questionnaire in Unit I, the questions on the Incest Attitude Form are designed to elicit feelings and to provide a basis for sharing information. Although participants have had some practice in talking about incest in previous activities, the discussion may still be difficult for them, due to the taboos surrounding discussion of any sexual issues, especially incest. Make sure to acknowledge several times during the course of the discussion just how hard it is to talk about these issues.

### **Description of Activity:**

1. Distribute Incest Attitude Form and allow about ten minutes for participants to complete it.
2. Go over the questions one at a time, asking for a show of hands to see how many “Agrees” and “Disagrees” you have. Use the same methods suggested with the Ambiguous Questionnaire to encourage open ended discussion (See Unit I, Activity D).
3. In the Discussion Guide, you will find information relevant to each question. You can use this information as a way to summarize each question before moving on to the next.

## INCEST ATTITUDE FORM

Circle Agree (A) if you feel that the statement is true; circle Disagree (D) if you feel that the statement is false:

- A.    D.    1) Incest should be a crime.
- A.    D.    2) If incest happens to someone older than 12 years old, it could be their fault because they could have gotten away.
- A.    D.    3) If a mother knows incest is happening between her husband and her child, she should get a divorce.
- A.    D.    4) There is nothing wrong if a brother and a sister have sex, as long as they are both over 10 years old.
- A.    D.    5) If brothers and sisters take baths together and they are under six years old, there is nothing wrong with it.
- A.    D.    6) If a father forces or tricks his child to have sex, but he has a good job and has never committed a crime before, he should not be sent to jail.
- A.    D.    7) It is never okay for a parent to sleep with a child.
- A.    D.    8) If a relative tries to trick or force a child into sex, and the child really likes the relative, but doesn't like what is happening, the child should stay away from the relative and not tell anyone what happened.
- A.    D.    9) If a child tells his/her mother that incest is happening, the mother should believe the child.
- A.    D.    10) When incest happens, the family should get counseling instead of the offender going to jail.
- A.    D.    11) A person who commits incest is not a "criminal" like a person who rapes people that he does not know.
- A.    D.    12) Fathers should not be allowed to touch their daughters if the daughter is older than twelve years old.
- A.    D.    13) It is never okay for a parent to touch a child's genitals.
- A.    D.    14) If a 13 year old asks an adult to have sex, and the adult does, it should not be called abuse.
- A.    D.    15) There should not be laws to control touch in families.
- A.    D.    16) Sexual abuse would be easier to report if the offender was a stranger instead of a relative.

## Discussion Guide for Incest Attitude Form:

1. Incest is a crime. Some people believe it is, while others believe it is not. There are various reasons for these differences in beliefs.
2. Many people believe that the victim would get away if s/he could. Yet incest victims often feel stuck in their situation because they do not want to leave their family. They fear they will not be believed and often feel like and dislike for the offender at the same time. Victims should not be expected to be able to leave their home and family with limited resources.
3. Some mothers would want a divorce, while others would not. Sometimes a victim would want the mother to get a divorce, and sometimes s/he would not. There is no one “best answer” for every incest family.
4. Sibling incest is a complex and difficult problem to sort out. Many professionals agree that sexual experimentation between siblings is common and that the “what have you got . . . what have I got” games are of little if any harm. However, sexual contact, particularly as siblings get older, or when one sibling is much older and more knowledgeable than the other, or forces or tricks the other can be damaging and unhealthy. Depending on the behavior and legal definitions this may be illegal.
5. Most people believe that there is nothing wrong with children bathing together. Many parents and child development specialists point out that children will not want to bathe together when privacy becomes an issue for them.
6. Even if a father has a good job and has never committed other types of crimes, incest is a crime. It is just as serious for this type of father to commit incest as it is for someone who does not have a “good” job and commits other crimes.
7. Parents sleeping with their children may be comforting, loving and nurturing. Problems arise when the child doesn’t want to sleep with the parent and the parent is needy and lonely and is sleeping with the child to get his/her own needs met.
8. The best thing the child could do is to tell someone and get help. The child could say “No” to the relative and then tell someone else about it.
9. It is hard for a parent, mother or father, to believe that incest or sexual abuse is happening, but they should listen and believe the child. Children seldom “make up” sexual abuse.
10. Professionals vary on their beliefs about this. Many therapists feel there is a need for courts to have a hold over offenders so that the person will stay in treatment. Families and individual offenders vary in deciding whether or not they want treatment, and what type of treatment will be most helpful.
11. Some people believe it is more serious due to greater frequency of assaults and emotional damage, while others believe incest offenders are less dangerous and their actions less serious. Both acts are illegal and cause severe damage.

12. Touch from mothers and fathers is important regardless of a child's age or gender.

13. Parent(s) may need to touch a child's genitals for cleansing and/or health reasons.

14. The adult is responsible because most states have laws which say children 16 years of age and under cannot consent to have sex with an adult.

15. Laws that control touch in families are there to check abuse and neglect. Due to the high frequency of child abuse, it is clear the laws are necessary.

16. It is more often difficult to report a relative because of the desire to protect both the relative and the family. Further, a child has a higher risk of not being believed if the offender is a relative.



## UNIT IV: WOMAN ABUSE

### ACTIVITIES:

Famous Names	15 minutes
Skit or "Deck the Halls" (film)	20 or 40
Experiencing Abuse: Speaker and/or Film: 'We Will Not Be Beaten'	40 minutes
Help for Battered Women and Their Children: Speaker	40 minutes
Working with Men Who Batter: Speaker	40 minutes

### OVERVIEW

The purpose of the unit is to provide students with information about women abuse, to help them understand the causes and consequences of battering, and to familiarize them with programs for battered women. In teaching this unit it is important to keep in mind that the root cause of battering is the belief that men both have a right to be and ought to be dominant over women. Violence is one means used by men to maintain their control – a control the society has taught them they are entitled to. Batterers will often explain their abuse with the cliché, "She needs to be taught who is boss".

Women's roles, on the other hand, can trap them in abusive situations. Women are expected to keep the family and marriage intact no matter what the cost. If a marriage is abusive and fails, the woman often blames herself and/or is blamed by others for its failures. The forced financial and emotional dependency of a wife role, especially if she has children, make it difficult to leave a violent situation. When a woman does seek help from police and social service agencies, she is often confronted with indifference or even hostility. Some people still consider that a wife or lover is a man's property and believe he has a right to hit her to "keep her in line."

When Carol's husband beat her and pushed her down the stairs she called the police. After explaining what had happened, she reported, the police just said, "Listen lady, he pays the bills, doesn't he? What he does inside his own house is his business".

### INTRODUCING THE UNIT TO STUDENTS (DEFINITIONS AND HISTORY):

Do you remember the statistic that every 18 seconds a woman in this country is beaten up by her husband? Battering or woman abuse is a very common form of family violence. You've learned a little about it already. Now we're going to try to understand it better – why it happens and what we can all do about it.

Some people wonder whether men get battered by women. Not much is known about battered men. It does happen sometimes and is probably very hard for men to report or discuss it. But it doesn't happen nearly as often to men, or

you would hear more about it. Here we will be focussing on battered women. You may feel that we're making men out to be the bad guys all of the time. We need to remind ourselves that not all men abuse women; just because a person is male doesn't mean that he is violent to women. Yet in our country it's a fact that a lot of men do abuse women and a lot of women are abused. One of the reasons that we're doing this series on family violence is to prevent it before it happens.

You've probably heard the phrase "battered wife." That's misleading because women are battered not only by their husbands, but also by boyfriends, especially when they live with them. So we will use the term battered women, or abused women, instead.

In talking about battering we're talking about physical violence (slapping, kicking, choking, etc.) or the threat of physical violence. Sometimes women are not actually beaten, but are constantly threatened with injury if they don't do something their husband or boyfriend wants them to do. These women also live under constant tension and in fear.

We're also talking about verbal abuse – when a woman is constantly put down, told she's no good, she's stupid, she's ugly, etc. Sometimes people don't think of verbal abuse as real abuse. But it's often just as destructive, if not more destructive than the physical abuse. Battered women often say, "You know, my bones will heal, but it's my feelings about myself that are so hard to change." What happens is that when you're told that you are no good enough times by someone who is in a position of authority over you, you begin to believe it.

We're also talking about sexual abuse which is when a woman is forced to do anything sexual against her will. Many times battered women submit to sex not because they feel like it, but because they're afraid of being beaten if they don't.

So these three elements, physical, verbal and sexual abuse are all part of what we mean when we talk about battering. And many battered women, probably most, are victims of all three types of abuse.

One little bit of history. Wife beating used to be perfectly legal. In fact, the phrase you hear sometimes, "the rule of thumb is. . ." came from the English law which made it legal to beat your wife as long as you used an implement no thicker than your thumb. It was only 100 years ago that the courts in this country ruled that a man didn't have the right to beat his wife. But, the court opinion stated: "If no permanent injury has been inflicted, it is better to draw the curtains, shut out the public glance, and leave the parties to forgive and forget."

And that is pretty much what has happened these last 100 years. The curtains have been drawn and battering has gone on, unchecked, behind closed doors. It's only in the last ten years, due to the efforts of women's groups, that battering has come to public attention, that programs have been set up to help battered women, and that our society is beginning to view battering as a crime.

## **Activity A: Famous Names**

### **Purpose:**

To give participants a chance to make statements about battering without identifying the views as their own (a non-threatening way to begin a discussion on battering or woman abuse.)

### **Description:**

1. Before the session, prepare a short list of celebrities or public figures you think participants would recognize. Write each one on an index card and put the list on the board.
2. Have each participant select one name. If any would prefer someone not listed, add that name to your list and make out an index card to give to the participant.
3. Ask participants to write on their cards what their “famous names” would say 1) about battering or 2) to a man who was being abusive or to a woman who was being abused. Then have them share their responses.
4. After all the participants have responded, you might ask, “If all this abuse is wrong, why is there so much of it?” If participants seem nervous or uneasy with the subject, you can say, “There seems to be some nervousness about this, and no wonder — it is an upsetting subject. Does anyone want to say more about how it’s making them feel?” You can reiterate that one of the goals of the series is that everyone will get more familiar with the topic and more able to talk about it.



## **Activity B: Skit on Battering or “Deck the Halls” (Film).**

### **Purpose:**

To give participants a dramatic example of women abuse as a common basis for discussion; to let them begin to hear their own and each other's thoughts and reactions.

### **Background:**

“From Behind the Newspaper” (see attached) is a very realistic dialogue between an abusive man and his girl friend. He gets mad because she comes home late from work, accuses her of having an affair with her supervisor, and becomes physically abusive.

In “Sunday Brunch”, (see attached), a couple are having breakfast when their neighbor comes over and admits to them that the noise they heard the night before was in fact a beating. The scene shows the kinds of reactions battered women often get when they talk about being abused.

“Deck the Halls” is a 20-minute film about an affluent white family at Christmas time. After a party for their friends, the husband, who is upset about a promotion he did not get, lashes out at his wife for “flirting” with another man and beats her. Their son comes home just afterwards. The film manages to depict a violent scene without sensationalizing it, and offers lots of material for discussion. Because it portrays an upper middle class white family, it helps dispel the myth that family violence only happens in poor families. However, for participants who are of a very different economic, racial or ethnic background, the problems portrayed may seem unreal.

See “Resources”, page 130 , for how to obtain “Deck the Halls.”

### **Description of Activity**

#### **A. The skits**

1. Choose in advance between the two skits which follow. If there are two teachers/facilitators present (preferably one male, one female), they could act out “From Behind the Newspaper”. Or ask for three student volunteers (one male, two female) and have them read aloud “Sunday Brunch”. Give them a chance to read the skit beforehand. If you want to use both skits, discuss the first before moving on to the second.

2. When the skit is over, you can use the following questions to spark discussion. Refer to the Discussion Guide for additional information.

“From Behind the Newspaper”

- How did the skit make you feel? Angry? Scared?
- How do you think Bob's silence at first made Linda feel?
- Bob wanted something. What was it? Did he get it by hitting her?
- Why do you think he hit her? What was the real reason?
- Is feeling jealous a good reason to hit someone?
- What else could Bob have done when he got angry?



- Did Linda do anything to deserve being hit?
- What do you think Linda will do? What would you suggest to her?
- Why might Linda stay with Bob?
- Is he using physical violence to control what she does and doesn't do?

“Sunday Brunch”

- Actors: How do you think your character felt?
- How did you feel playing this person?
- Why does Carol say Burt hits her?
- Did John and Alice respond differently to Carol's situation?
- What differences do you see? Was one more helpful than the other?
- How else might each of them have responded?
- What does Carol need? (She might need more than one thing.)
- Many people hesitate to intervene in cases of family violence. Why?
- Why might Carol stay with her husband?

B. The Film

1. Hand out index cards before the film and ask the group to jot down their responses to the film. Tell them that they do not have to put their names on the cards, but that you would like to collect them at the end of the meeting to look them over.

2. When the film is over, give the group time to write on their cards. Then you can use the following questions to spark discussion.

- How did the film make you feel?
- Did the film seem realistic to you?
- What pressures is Mr. G. feeling about his life? What are some of the things he is angry about? How did he handle his anger?
- Do Mr. and Mrs. G. play traditional roles in their family? What are examples of this?
- Why do you think Mr. Greensboro hit his wife? What was the real reason? Do you think it was the first time?
- Mr. G. wanted something. Did he get what he wanted by hitting her?
- Could Mrs. G. have avoided the abuse by doing anything differently?
- What do you think she will do? What would be her reasons for leaving the marriage? Why might she stay in the marriage?
- How did the son feel?
- What would you do if you were one of their children?
- How else might the situation have been handled?

## “FROM BEHIND THE NEWSPAPER”

Scene: Bob H. is watching TV and reading a newspaper simultaneously. He is drinking a can of beer. His girlfriend, Linda, has just walked in carrying a bag of groceries.

She: I'm home!

He: (Continues to read newspaper.)

She: What are you reading about?

He: (Silence).

She: What's the matter with you. You are not talking to me now?

He: Where the hell have you been?

She: What do you mean where have I been? Can't you see I've been shopping?

He: Do you know it's seven o'clock? It took you two damn hours to do shopping?

She: No, it didn't take me two hours; I stopped off after work to have a drink with the gang at work. Today was Ginny's last day and we were having a . . .

He: Don't give me that; I know you've been getting it on with that supervisor of yours. Don't you think I noticed the way he looks at you?

She: Mr. Simpson doesn't look at me any different than anyone else. What's your problem, anyway? You been drinking again? Besides, if I want to do a little socializing with my friends at work, that's my business.

He: Yeah? Well, you better make it my business. I'm not going to have any woman of mine messing around like that.

She: You must be drunk! I'm not going to stand here and listen to your wild imagination. What a jerk! (walking away).

He: What did you say? (jumping up) What the hell did you say?

She: I didn't say anything.

He: No? I heard you! I'm not going to take that crap from you anymore! (pushing her)

She: Don't you lay a hand on me! If you do, I'm going to call the cops.

He: (Putting his fist to her face) Go ahead, but it'll be the last time you call anyone!

## SUNDAY BRUNCH''

Scene: Alice and John are sitting at the breakfast table in their new apartment. They just moved into the neighborhood and had trouble sleeping last night.

Alice: So, how do you like the new neighborhood?

John: Fine, but could you sleep last night?

Alice: No, as a matter of fact. What was that racket? Was that poor woman being beaten?

John: I couldn't tell. Christ, it sounded awful though.

Alice: John, do you think we should do something?

John: But it's none of our business.

Alice: What if it were me getting beaten?

John: That would never happen to you. Do you think I would beat you?

Alice: Well, I still think we should do something.

(The doorbell rings. Alice and John look at one another. Pause)

John: Who the hell is that on Sunday morning?

Alice: I'll get it.

(Alice goes off stage to answer the door. She comes back with her neighbor, Carol. Carol is very agitated.)

John: Good morning. What brings you over so early?

Carol: I just wanted to welcome you to the neighborhood, and . . .

Alice: Why thank you.

John: Yes, thank you, but what was all that noise last night?

Carol: Er, yes, um, I wanted to apologize for that. I hope it didn't keep you up.

Alice: But are you okay? Is there something we can do?

Carol: My husband Burt and I have these arguments, and sometimes they get out of hand.

John: I'll say they do.

Alice: Are you all right?

Carol: Well, sort of. He hits me when he doesn't like what I have to say.

John: I don't understand why you put up with it.

Alice: John!

John: No, honey, I don't understand.

Carol: You mean why don't I hit him back? He's stronger than me.

John: No, why don't you leave him?

Carol: What would I do with the kids? Who would raise them? There's no place to go. My parents live in California. I'm new here like you two. I don't have any friends. Burt doesn't let me go out even with girlfriends. Besides, if I tried to leave Burt said he would kill me.

John: Where is he now? Does he know you're here?

Alice: John, that's selfish of you!

John: I don't want some enraged animal coming in here and turning the place upside down.

Alice: But Burt isn't an animal. He's a computer programmer. Carol, I'm very sorry to hear this is going on. I just have no idea what to do for you. I admit that I'm a little afraid of your husband now, too.

Carol: Don't worry. He's at his parent's house. They went to church together.

Alice: What have you tried?

Carol: All sorts of things. But nothing does any good.

Alice: What if we called the police?

Carol: That might help . . . Oh God! But what would happen after they left? He'd kill me!

Alice: You've got a point.

John: Isn't there some shelter for battered women? Didn't that sheet the Chamber of Commerce gave us list a shelter? Alice, could you get it?

Alice: Yes, John, here it is.

Carol: I'm not a battered woman. Besides I can't spend the rest of my life living in a shelter. How will I afford clothes for the kids?

John: Maybe they have some answers. Why don't you call them?



## Discussion Guide for Skits or Film:

The following guide suggests ways to pursue some general issues that will arise, regardless of whether you have chosen one skit over another or have used the film.

First of all, avoid discussing the quality of the film or skits, because this can be a digression from the content. Do not ask questions like, "What did you think of the film?" Instead, encourage students to say whatever the film/skit made them feel. Accept all responses equally.

**"Why might she stay?"** . . . Teenagers are often impatient with Mrs. Greensboro, Carol, and Linda. They might say, "Why did she take it?"; "Why didn't she hit him back?"; "I wouldn't take that kind of treatment!" If this comes up, you can look at the reasons why she might leave or stay. Ask for suggestions and list them on the board. The "stay" list is usually the longer of the two.

**"Sexual Jealousy"** (film, "From Behind the Newspaper") . . . Sometimes people think that sexual jealousy is a sign of love. "He loves me so much that he doesn't want anyone else looking at me." Try to explore whether it really is a sign of love. Possessiveness might be not so much love as a desire to control or "own" the person. There is a long history of women being considered men's property.

**"Could Mrs. G. have avoided the abuse?"** . . . Did Linda do anything to deserve being hit? Many women who are abused say, "If only I hadn't . . . , he wouldn't have hit me." Yet most often when an abusive man is in an angry mood he will pick on anything the woman does. If students say, "Mrs. G. shouldn't have talked back to him," for instance, ask whether anything she said or did would have changed what Mr. G. did.

**"Why did he hit her?"** . . . Students may list a lot of the actual or possible pressures on the man in the skit or film. As you build up a picture of a man under terrible stress and pressure, you might ask one or both of the following: What kind of pressure is the woman under in her life? Does she resort to violence? Is pressure at work an excuse for violence?

**"How else might the situation have been handled?"** . . . What else could Bob have done when he got so angry? What would help John keep his promise that he will never hit Alice? It's good to air some alternatives to violence. Mr. Greensboro, for instance, might have talked about how upset he was, what was on his mind, long before his worries and anger built up to such a pitch inside him. Any of the men, once so angry and out of control, could choose to walk out the door rather than hit the woman. One guideline to mention: it is good to fight sitting down, across the room from the person you're fighting with.

**“What does the man want?”** . . . What is he trying to accomplish by hitting her? You might try to point out that abuse is often a way of controlling someone and making them do what you want. Mr. G.’s outburst is not so much an explosion as a way of making his wife fit into the role he wants her to play. Bob’s outburst is partly a way to keep Linda from seeing friends separately from him, an attempt to control what she does.

**“Gender roles (film)”** . . . “Deck the Halls” shows the husband and wife playing quite traditional gender roles. She does all the preparation for the party they are giving, and he seems to expect this. He has all the anxieties about work. And so on. Mention of these in the discussion will prepare the way for the later unit on gender role stereotyping and how it contributes to family violence.

**“Intervention”** (“Sunday Brunch”) . . . Many people hesitate to intervene in cases of family violence because they believe it is a “private matter.” This is a major reason why so much family violence is allowed to go on. Until laws are passed requiring police intervention, police officers more often than not fail to go to the assistance of women being abused by their husbands. Similarly, mandatory reporting of child abuse was enacted because too many people chose to ignore the evidence of physical abuse, or considered it a “family matter” that was none of their business.

## **Activity C: Experiencing Abuse: Speaker and/or Film:**

### **“We Will Not Be Beaten”**

#### **Purpose:**

To explore the nature of woman abuse through the words of real people talking about abuse and how it has affected their lives.

#### **Background:**

In this activity, students see and discuss the film “We Will Not Be Beaten” and, alternately, or in addition, have a speaker who shares with them her personal experience with battering.

Personal testimony and firsthand accounts are very effective ways to address the issue of battering with teenagers. For that reason, we have suggested in this unit that you try to line up two speakers – a woman who has been in an abusive relationship and is willing to share her experiences with the group, and a woman who works with the battered women’s program in your area who will describe what her program does. This will make the issue less remote for younger teens and those with no personal acquaintance with battering. It will also reduce the taboo in talking about the subject for those young people who do have experience with battering.

In Massachusetts, you can call the Coalition of Battered Women Service Groups in Boston to locate the battered women’s program nearest you. Usually these programs are happy to provide speakers. They may also be able to help you find someone who will talk with your group about her personal experience with battering.

The film, “We Will Not Be Beaten” also provides first hand testimony. Made by women working in a shelter for battered women, it shows discussions among different women who have been battered by husbands or boyfriends. They describe the beatings they got, their concern for themselves and their children, the difficulty of escape, their first steps toward safety. All have left the battering situation; some are recently arrived in a shelter, others are well into a new life.

The whole film (about 45 minutes) is too long to be effective for most students, so we recommend showing the first two segments. (The sections of the film are separated by a series of still photographs accompanied by music.) If you stop the projector at the end of the second series of photographs, this will provide about 15 minutes of film). See “Resources,” page 130 , for how to obtain the film.

## Description of Activity:

### A. Speaker

1. Talk beforehand with the woman who is going to come speak with your group. Familiarize yourself with her situation and find out from her how she wants to tell her story to the students. Are questions welcome? Does she mind being interrupted, or would she prefer questions at the end? Would she like you to ask her leading questions in a quasi-interview format? In introducing her to participants, describe the format you've discussed and if questions are welcome, encourage students to ask them.
2. Plan on some discussion time either after the speaker has left or in the next meeting. You will want to process the experience with them. Students may have questions and thoughts to share that they didn't feel comfortable expressing in front of the speaker. Ask them how they felt as she was speaking? Then, depending on what her particular situation was, go over with students what kind(s) of abuse she described (physical, verbal, sexual), and what they thought her reasons for staying and her reason for leaving had been.

### B. Film

1. Some participants, especially if their mothers have ever been battered, may get uncomfortable watching this film. Some young men may get defensive watching a film which focusses so intensely on men's abuse of women. We suggest introducing the film something like this: "This is a 15 minute film which features interviews with women who have survived battering. Some people feel tense or anxious while watching this film because of how honest the women are about what happened to them and how they feel. If you find yourself feeling uncomfortable, try to relax and remember that it is a short film. We'll all get a chance to talk about our reactions afterwards."
2. When the film ends, hand out the attached Reaction Sheets. These are for the participants to use and are not to be handed in. Allow several minutes for them to fill the sheets out.
3. Questions for discussion include:
  - How did the film make you feel?
  - Did anything in the film surprise you?
  - What would it be like to be a child of one of those women?
  - Why do some women stay? Leave?
  - What does a woman need in a battering situation?



## REACTION SHEET

Put a circle around the words below that describe how you feel about the movie you just saw.

Watching the movie made me feel:

TRAPPED UNHAPPY BETTER SLEEPY  
 OPEN RELIEVED  
 RESPONSIBLE SCARED LIVELY ANGRY  
 BORED ANXIOUS CLOSED RELAXED  
 SAD SILLY SICK INTERESTED  
 STUPID DUMB TIRED CONFUSED  
 BUMMED OUT SURPRISED UNDERSTANDING  
 MAD TENSE NERVOUS HONEST  
 TURNED OFF GROSS

Write any other words that show how you felt: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What did you think about the film? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Discussion Guide For Film:**

If, in talking about how the film made them feel, the boys seem particularly quiet, you might want to speak directly to this. You could ask, “Are there differences between how the males in the group react to the film and how the females do?”

For discussion of why women stay or leave, see the Discussion Guide following “Deck the Halls.”

**Alternatives to the Speaker and/or Film:**

Read aloud to the group from stories by or interviews with women who have been abused.

## **Activity D: Help for Battered Women and Their Children. Speaker**

### **Purpose:**

To expose participants to programs that help battered women and their children.

### **Background:**

The battered women's shelter movement began in the United States in the mid seventies, as an offshoot of the women's movement. There are currently some 700 programs for battered women and their children throughout the country. In Massachusetts, 31 programs exist, 22 of which are part of an active statewide coalition called the Coalition of Battered Women Service Groups. In 1983, the programs in this coalition provided services to over 25,700 battered women and their children.

A crucial service these programs provide is refuge. Through residential shelters and "safe home" networks, battered women and their children are given a place to stay, free of charge, where they can escape the violence in their homes and take stock of their situation. In 1983 in Massachusetts, 14,000 women and their 19,000 children were sheltered. More than twice that many families (3080) were turned away for lack of space.

Another key element of battered women's programs is peer support. In the shelters or support groups, battered women, who often feel intensely isolated, get a chance to meet, hear from and compare stories with other abused women. From each other they learn that they are not alone and that they are not to be blamed for the violence.

The shelter movement has twin goals — to provide non-violent options for abused women and their children and ultimately to eradicate violence against women. A great deal has been accomplished in the last decade. Public awareness of battering has grown enormously, laws have been changed, and both the police and the courts are beginning to take battering more seriously. Much remains to be done, however. The shelters are often full and have to turn women away. Shelter and program staff are underpaid. And, most importantly, the beatings continue.

### **Description of Activity:**

1. Contact your local shelter or service program for battered women and their children and see if someone from the program would be willing to come and talk about the program with the group.
2. Talk with the shelter representative beforehand. Fill her in on what you have covered so far. Explain that you want the young people in your group or class to get a sense of what a battered women's program does for battered women — the services, the kinds of support offered, etc. Ask her to describe the legal options available to battered women in your state.
3. Encourage students to ask questions. And ask questions yourself to try to bring out issues you think would be of particular interest to your group.
4. Reserve some time in the next meeting to ask students what they thought of the shelter program. You can ask: Do you think the program would help a battered woman and her children? In what ways?

## **Activity E: Working with Men Who Batter: Speaker**

### **Purpose:**

To expose participants to the counseling work being done with men who batter.

### **Background:**

There are only about 100 programs nationally, six of which are in Massachusetts, that do counseling with men who batter. This small number reflects the fact that less than two percent of all men who are abusive to their partners are willing to take responsibility for their violence and go into counseling to eliminate it. Batterers may regret the extent of injury inflicted, but they often do not reject what they see as their right to be violent. They tend to be suspicious of counseling and when they do seek help, it is often for the wrong reason – to convince their partners to take them back – rather than out of a deep desire to change their violent and controlling behavior.

There are success stories, of men who eliminate violence of their relationships, by going into counseling to deal with the violence. It is very interesting to talk with counselors who work with abusive men. But it may be hard to locate a speaker. In Massachusetts, you can call Emerge, which is a Boston based men's counseling service on domestic violence. They may be able to provide a speaker or refer you to another men's program in your area. In other states, the battered women's program nearest you would be able to give you information on whether there is a men's counseling program in your area.

### **Description of Activity:**

The format would be similar to that described in the previous activity.



## UNIT V: DATE RAPE

### ACTIVITIES

Ellyn's Story or "The Party Game" (film)	40 minutes
"Saying What You Mean" (role play) or "End of the Road" (film)	40 minutes
Relationships Contract	50 minutes

### OVERVIEW

This unit emphasizes the seriousness and prevalence of the problem of date rape, and challenges the tendency to blame the victim. There are also several activities that focus participants more positively on how to communicate better in their relationships.

Recent research indicates that violence is prevalent in young people's relationships. Date rape accounts for approximately 60% of all reported rapes, and the majority of victims are between the ages of 16 and 24. A study of 190 male undergraduates in Alabama revealed that sexual coercion is a common practice: 53% of men had kissed a woman against her will; 61% had "placed a hand on (an unwilling) woman's knee or breast"; 42% had "removed or disarranged a woman's clothing against her will;" and an alarming 15% admitted having committed rape. A survey of 355 midwestern college students, with an average age of 19.8 years, found that nearly one-fourth of pre-marital relationships involve violence. Particularly distressing were the results of two additional studies conducted by the same research team. In one, 25% of male college students indicated that they would definitely commit rape if they were assured of not being caught, and in a companion study, more than one-half of young men indicated some likelihood that they themselves would rape if they knew they would escape punishment. The high school years, when serious dating usually first begins, are an excellent time to challenge and perhaps avert these abusive patterns.

Most of us blame ourselves when we become victims. If we go to work and come home to find that our house has been broken into and the TV and stereo taken, our first response is to think of all the things that we should have done differently: "I should have fixed that lock . . . I never should have left that second story window open . . . Why was I so stupid to leave that ladder laying in plain sight in the yard." We are blaming ourselves for the robbery, when in fact the person who broke in and took our things is the one who is to blame.

We also blame other people when they become victims, particularly when the victim is a woman, or child, and particularly when sex is involved. "Well, what was she doing in that bar, anyway?" "Then why was she sitting in his lap?" "If she didn't like it, why didn't she scream?" We have heard these sentiments broadcast a million times and may have voiced them, or at least thought them, ourselves.

Sometimes we blame the victim directly – “You had no business in that car”, thus implying she brought the violence on herself. Other times, the victim is blamed indirectly, often by people genuinely trying to help her. “You should have told some one sooner;” “You should have spent the night here.” The implication is that the victim could have prevented the abuse if she had done something differently. Either way, blaming the victim points to the abused as at fault and ingores the perpetrator’s responsibility for controlling his own actions.

This unit in particular is most effective if taught by a male/female team because it touches all participants (not just actual victims) in very personal ways. Boys will be less defensive and more likely to say what they really feel with a man present who is encouraging them to participate. Girls too will feel more comfortable airing the difficult choice they face in dating situations if a woman is involved in the discussion. So, if you have been teaching the curriculum alone up to this point, try to involve a teacher or counselor of the opposite sex in helping to facilitate this section of the curriculum.

## **Activity A: Ellyn's Story or Film: "The Party Game."**

### **Purpose:**

To examine date rape as a form of woman abuse which occurs frequently in young people's relationships and to challenge the tendency to blame the victim.

### **Background:**

In the film, "The Party Game," two young men crash a party. One picks up a young woman. They dance, he flirts and moves in on her, she is pleased, but also uncomfortable with his pushiness. He suggests they go down to the pool house. She hesitates, but lets him talk her into it. They make out for a while, then he starts to force her to have sex. When she tries to get away, he hits her hard and the film ends. The film is 9 minutes long.

"Ellyn's Story," which is included here, has a similar plot and is a fine alternative to the film. Both film and story prompt discussion of many issues. See Resources, page 130, for how to obtain "The Party Game."

### **Description of Activity:**

1. To introduce the activity you can say: In teenage relationships, the violence that occurs is often connected to sex. It may be a fight prompted by jealousy, or a situation in which sex is forced on the young women. We tend to have a picture in our minds of rape as a stranger leaping out of the bushes and grabbing a woman as she walks down the street. Most rapes, however, are not done by strangers but by someone the woman or girl knows. This is called acquaintance or date rape: That is, forced sex by someone you know and probably had reason to trust — the friend of a friend, or someone you have dated once, twice, or many times. Reports show that date rape happens a lot among teenagers. In fact, 60% of all reported rapes are date rapes, and the majority of victims are between the ages of 16 and 24. Reports also show that some teenagers even accept it as part of the dating scene.

Any kind of rape is a crime. Many states have recently made marital rape (between a husband and a wife) against the law just like all other kinds of rape. We're going to see a film/hear a story which will help us talk about date rape — how it happens, why it happens and what you can do about it.

2. Hand out index cards for participants to write down their reactions to the film or story. They do not need to put their names on the cards.

3. Show the film or read the story aloud.

4. Use the following question and the Discussion Guide to discuss the story or film.

- How did the film/story make you feel?
- Did it seem realistic?
- What did she want? What did he want?
- Did he get any early signals from her that she didn't want to have sex with him? Did he respect these signals? Did he ask her what she wanted?
- What do you think should happen to the guy?



## ELLYN'S STORY

When Pete's parents went out of town, Pete invited all his friends over for a party. The party was a great success and people seemed to have a great time. Before anyone had realized, it had gotten quite late and several people began to leave when they realized they had stayed after their curfew. The house was quite a mess and Pete was interested in having someone stay over and help clean up. Pete was particularly interested in Ellyn's help. He'd been wanting to get to know her better, especially since she broke up with Brad. She looked great tonight and Pete thought that she had been very friendly to him throughout the party. Who knows, he thought to himself, she might even be more friendly after all her friends are gone, especially since Brad was at the party with Barb.

Nearly everyone was running out the door to avoid clean up duty, but Pete made sure his request for help was heard. "Hey, do you want me to be stuck with this mess? Someone's got to stay and help, how about you, Ellyn? I'll walk you home later." Ellyn didn't want Pete to be stuck with the mess alone, and besides, Brad looked a bit jealous when Pete asked her. She agreed to help.

After they had the place nearly cleaned, Pete reached for Ellyn and began to kiss her. Ellyn was taken aback and nervously said that it was late and she'd better hurry home. Pete replied that they had plenty of time and then attempted to kiss her again. Ellyn said, "I just stayed to help. . .stop it." Pete became annoyed and said, "What is wrong, don't you trust me? You were sure friendly earlier tonight. Don't play games with me, Ellyn." Ellyn didn't know what to say. She was confused and things seemed to be happening so fast. She wondered if she had been too friendly. Pete was Brad's friend, but. . .

Pete held her arm tighter and grabbed for her shoulder. Ellyn became frightened and said "Let go," but Pete accused her of teasing him and became very angry. When he grabbed her again, Ellyn felt overpowered and screamed. Pete hit her, covered her mouth and when Ellyn froze in terror, Pete forced her to have intercourse.

## Discussion Guide for Ellyn's Story:

In many groups, initial reactions to the film or story will be along the lines of "She was stupid. She should never have gone down there with him." This is a classic blaming the victim response, in which responsibility for the rape is put on the girl. Ten or fifteen minutes of discussion may occur before any comment surfaces from students like, "Well, that guy was a jerk."

If the majority of participants do seem to be blaming the girl, it is critical to stick with the question of who is at fault. Point out how many responses seem to be focussing on the girl and ask why this is so. Ask what she wanted, why she went outside (film) or stayed to help (story); how she responded to each of his sexual advances. Explain the widespread tendency to blame the victim and point out that is what they are doing. Explain that by blaming the victims of sexual abuse, we are absolving the abusers of responsibility. We are also perpetuating a very grim view of maleness which says, in effect, "Of course, any man is going to rape if given the chance. It's up to you not to give him the chance."

Only when and if you feel the group has realized first, that they are blaming her, and second, that she is not to blame, should you let the discussion move to different things she might have said or done. Students will talk about being careful – "You never leave a party alone with someone you don't know," and about being assertive – "I would have told him off and left." Use the film/story to look at when being more careful or being more assertive would have helped the girl, and when it would not have done any good. Make sure to ask what he could have done or said differently. You want students to come away from this part of the discussion with a double message: Yes, you can be assertive and careful and maybe protect yourself from rape. But no, you cannot always prevent it. The first part of the message gives students some hope; the second part keeps them from blaming themselves and their friends.

Additional discussion questions with guidelines for the facilitator are described below:

### How will the boy and the girl feel afterwards?

Most women who have experienced date rape feel confused, ashamed, and responsible for what happened. They blame themselves, though they are not to blame. (Women who have been raped by a stranger may have similar feelings, depending on the circumstances of the rape.) Rapists report that what they feel afterwards is not so much sexual pleasure or satisfaction, as the feeling of having been powerful or dominant.

### What stereotypes did each act out?

Talk about pressures on guys to test their manhood or virility by "sexually conquering" a woman; the stereotype of the strong, dominant male; a tendency to use force instead of talking something out. For young women the stereotype is to try to be popular, attractive, sexy, to please men, and also to be polite – not to make a fuss by yelling or kicking.

### When does it stop being seduction and start being rape?

Try to get lots of opinions on this, as it is a difficult and important line to define. Boys are taught that when girls say “No” they don’t mean it; how can they best recognize when she really means it? Or should they always take “No” at face value? Boys sometimes complain that girls lead them on and tease them, they say “No” just when they are getting excited. Girls sometimes feel they aren’t allowed to change their minds, or to want to make out, but not have intercourse. If students are not expressing these different feelings themselves, you can pose them as “typical” feelings and get students to respond.

### Would anything have been different if they had known each other better?

Rape does happen in more long-term boyfriend/girlfriend situations and is an even bigger violation of trust than the rape in the film or story. There is also the threat or risk of it happening again.

### Do you think she will tell anyone?

Chances are she will not tell anyone, because she feels ashamed, blames herself, fears her friends or parents will not understand or will blame her. This is a big problem with acquaintance rape, for two reasons: the rapist gets off with no consequences and may do it to someone else; and the woman lives with a painful secret rather than getting to express her anger, and get support.

### How would you handle this type of situation?

**Boys:** What do you do when you think a girl is leading you on, or when you find yourself wanting to have sex when she doesn’t?

**Girls:** Be clear about what you are willing to take from others. You have a right not to be touched or made to do things you do not want to do. Also, learn ways to take care of yourself. This may be taking a self defense class, learning to yell or kick without embarrassment, carrying a whistle, or arranging with friends to avoid being in risky situations alone. Young women can work together to stop date rape, by reporting to each other which guys don’t listen to “No” or are forceful, or by having signals they can give their friends when they’re in a situation they do not think they can handle.

Young men and young women: Everyone can help prevent date rape by not encouraging or being impressed by guys who boast to you that they have ‘scored’.



## Activity B: Role Play: Saying What You Mean or Film, “End of the Road”

### **Purpose:**

To explore some of the ways a girl can let a boy know that he is being too aggressive.

### **Background:**

Role playing can be a very effective and engaging technique. The role play suggested here gives participants a chance to explore what it is like to say “No” when they mean “No.” There are sometimes situations in which it is important for a girl to communicate clearly that she is not interested in sexual interaction. The pressure to be popular, to “not be a prude,” and the more subtle sex role messages that women should be passive and compliant can make it very difficult for girls to assert their real feelings. This role play is designed to help students feel more confident about communicating what they feel. In addition too, or as a substitution for the “Saying What You Mean” role play, we recommend a short film, “End of the Road.” Part of the same acquaintance rape series as “The Party Game,” this film shows a potential date rape situation which is averted because the girl is able to be very clear and assertive about what she does and doesn’t want.

See page 130 for how to obtain “End of the Road.”

The success of a role play depends on the confidence and enthusiasm of the teacher or facilitator. You have to communicate that this is going to be interesting and fun. It is usually better not to begin by asking for volunteers. Most students will not volunteer for such an activity; but many students actually enjoy doing it once they are “drafted.”

The role play we are suggesting is somewhat unusual in that it utilizes an “inner voice” and “outer voice” technique. Jane, the girl in the role play is played by two people – one of whom says what she thinks Jane would say in this situation, the other of whom speaks for Jane’s inner voice, and says what Jane is really thinking. The same is true for Tom, the boy in the role play.

This role play calls for active involvement on the part of the teacher/facilitator. It will be up to you to orchestrate the voices. Just before the role play begins, you should check if Tom is ready with his first line. Tom and Jane should then start it off. After they have had a chance to talk, stop the action and call on their inner voices to share what they were really thinking. Then the dialogue can move back to Tom, and Jane, and so on.

It is important not to let a role play go on for too long. Students cannot sustain it for more than a few minutes, and those who are watching get restless. Several minutes of role playing can generate quite a lot of discussion.



### **Description of Activity:**

Explain to the group that they are about to participate in a somewhat unusual role play, in which 4 actors will be playing two parts. Two of the actors will be playing the “inner voices” of the other two; their job will be to say what their person is really thinking and feeling.

2. Select four students who you think might enjoy being “center stage.” Give two of them the role play card for Jane to look over, and the other two the role play card for Tom. Each pair can decide which of them will be the “inner voice” and which the outer.

3. While the four actors are reading over their roles, you should explain the general situation to the rest of the group. Jane and Tom are at a party together at Susan’s house. Susan is a good friend of Jane’s and Tom is Susan’s cousin. He lives on the other side of town, so he and Jane have only met once before at Susan’s house. They are both pretty interested in each other; and they have just finished doing a slow dance, in which Tom held Jane very tightly.

4. Ask the actors to proceed to the “stage” area, consisting of two chairs for Jane and Tom to sit on, with the “inner voice” standing behind them.

Ask Tom to begin. Remind the actors that every once in a while you will call on one of the inner voices to fill in what Jane or Tom is really thinking.

5. When you feel that the role play has generated enough good material for discussion, or when energy is flagging, you should call “time” and begin the discussion (See Discussion Guide).

6. After the discussion, if there is time, set up the role play again. Only this time, with three actors: Jane, Tom and Tom’s inner voice. Jane should be instructed to respond to Tom with what she is really feeling. The actor playing Tom says only what he thinks Tom would say to Jane in this situation, and the inner voice will be called upon to respond with what Tom is feeling in response to Jane’s words.

ROLE CARDS

JANE: You are at a party at a friend's house. Your friend's cousin, Tom, whom you met once before and think is pretty cute, just asked you to dance. It was a slow song and he held you very close – a little too close you felt. But you didn't say anything. You figured that maybe, that's the way kids dance at his school, and besides, you didn't want to turn him off. Now you're standing around together talking. You really hope that he's going to ask for your phone number. He starts out the conversation by telling you that you're a really good dancer, that he really enjoyed dancing with you. You are to respond as you think she would respond.

TOM: You are at a party at your cousin's house. You live in another part of town so you don't know too many of these kids. You've just broken up with your girlfriend, or rather, she broke up with you, so you're feeling more than ready to find yourself another girl, or at least have a good time. You've met your cousin's friend Jane before and think she's pretty attractive. She's looking especially cute tonight with her low-cut blouse. You've just danced with her and held her really close. She seemed to like it. Now you want to convince her to go for a drive with you. You start by telling her that you think she's a really good dancer.

### Discussion Guide for Role Cards:

At the end of a role play, it is important to give the actors the first opportunity to comment: How did it feel to play your part? Was it hard to carry on a conversation between the “real” Jane and Tom when you could hear what each other’s inner voices were saying?

Ask other students to comment on what they heard. Was there a big difference between the inner and outer voices? What made it hard for Jane to say what she was really thinking? How do you think Tom would have responded if Jane were actually speaking what was on her mind? Could she have found a way to say no, without losing him forever. If the action hadn’t been stopped, what might have happened next?

If the second role play occurs, the discussion should again start with the actors: How did it feel to play your part? Was it hard being so honest with Tom? Was it hard hearing Jane be so honest? What if Tom had said what his inner voice was saying?

The group could then comment on the action. Did Jane present her feelings well? Were her messages clear enough? Would she and Tom ever speak to each other again? Why or why not?

The combination of these role plays should make very clear the dilemma that many girls face – if a boy is being aggressive and the girl does not speak up, she may find herself in a situation that is awkward at best, and threatening or dangerous at worst. If she does speak up, the boy may be very angry, or insulted.

## **Activity C: Relationships Contract**

### **Purpose:**

To focus on what participants want in dating relationships; to air differences between individuals, and particularly between males and females about what is desirable in a relationship; and to emphasize the importance of making choices.

### **Description of Activity:**

1. Duplicate and distribute the attached Relationship's Contract.
2. As students are looking it over, you can say: In the last few meetings, we've been looking at some of the negative things that happen in relationships. Today we're going to focus on what you want in relationships. A relationship contract is a way of coming to an understanding with someone you are dating about what you each want in the relationship. In this group, we will use the contract to help each person get clearer about what she or he wants and also to see if males and females tend to want the same or different things.

Make sure to stress with students that they need not be dating, or even be interested in dating to answer the questions. Everyone has ideas about the ways they think relationships between people should be.

3. If you are assigning the contract for homework, ask participants to write down their answers and bring them in the next day. If you are asking students to fill it out in the class or group, give them about ten minutes to complete it.

4. Divide the group into male and females with the task of going over each question and comparing answers. Because the groups probably will not get through the whole contract, choose a couple of questions from each section for them to discuss first. Tell them to go back to the other questions if they have time. Explain that for each question a note taker should write down the most common answers. This is important because when the groups come back together, the girls will want to hear what the boys' ideas were and vice versa.

Ideally, a male teacher/facilitator will meet with the young men and a female teacher/facilitator will meet with the young women. If you are alone, you can float back and forth between the two groups.

In facilitating the separate groups, be aware that responses will be based on what students think should happen on a date. Also ask them also to discuss what really does happen.



5. After 20 minutes (more if you have time), get the two groups back together to report and compare their findings. Your role is to encourage as much dialogue and debate as possible. When the question-by-question comparison is done, you can ask:

- What topics do boys and girls agree on most?
- Is it always easy to stand up for what you do and don't want? Ask for examples and strategies.
- Can you imagine yourself and someone you were dating having a conversation about these things? Do you think it's a good idea?

## RELATIONSHIP CONTRACT

This "contract" is to help you know better what you want in your close relationships. Two people in a relationship can use this contract to understand what each person wants and where they disagree. Write your answers down and, if you want to, compare answers with your friends or your boyfriend(s) or girlfriend(s). If the contract was assigned as homework, bring this sheet and your answers to class.

### Dating

1. Should every weekend and evening be spent with girl/boyfriend?
2. Who decides what to do and where to go on a date?
3. What about expenses? Should the boy be expected to always pay for expenses?
4. If your date always pays for expenses, are you obligated to go along with sexual advances? To act in a certain way?
5. How much do you want you or your date to use alcohol or other drugs.
6. Is there any situation in which it would be okay for your date (or boyfriend or girlfriend) to push you around? To hit you?

### Sexual Rights

1. Is either person free to say that they do or don't want to go any further sexually?
2. At what point may a person refuse to have sex?
3. If both you and your girl/boyfriend agree to have sex, whose responsibility is it to use birth control?

### Other Relationships

1. Is it alright for you or your boy/girlfriend to make friends with those of the opposite sex? If so, how will you deal with jealousy?
2. Do you include each other in those relationships?

### Priorities

1. What qualities are most important to you in a boy/girlfriend?
2. What are the most important ingredients in a relationship to you?

## UNIT VI: GENDER ROLE STEREOTYPES AND SOCIALIZATION

### ACTIVITIES

Stereotypes (word association)	20 minutes
Growing Up Male and Female	40 minutes (2 sessions)
TV Viewing: explanation discussion	10 minutes 40 minutes

### OVERVIEW

In previous units, students have examined the realities (and myths) of different forms of abuse. Here they look at a root cause of family violence: gender roles.

We learn early in our lives that certain gender role standards are expected from women and men. Women are to be pleasing, attractive, nurturing, submissive and feminine. Men are to be strong, dominant, invulnerable and masculine. These misconceptions about men and women are not only limiting and burdensome, but they can also lead to family violence. For men, being tough, unemotional, unexpressive, and having to prove oneself through aggression can spill over into violent behavior. For women, being passive, accommodating and dependent both economically and psychologically can lead to accepting abuse.

One way to prevent future family violence is to help teenagers understand gender role stereotyping and recognize the ways they act it out in their own lives. The curriculum seeks to offer alternatives: to young men, more open communication and less abusive ways of expressing anger; and to young women, more pride and self-respect, and a vigorous refusal to accept abuse.

### INTRODUCING THE UNIT TO STUDENTS

A stereotype is a set of qualities you expect of someone even if you do not know them or what they are really like. Stereotyping lumps people together in groups and does not allow us to see people as individuals. The pattern of characterizing and stereotyping any group, “the Jews”, “the Catholics”, “the Blacks”, “the Whites”, “the rich”, “the poor”, “all women”, “all men”, is so deeply embedded in our culture that we tend to accept these generalizations as true.

In instances of family violence, many more men than women beat or push around their mates and sexually abuse children. This is not because every man is a bad or violent person. People have been trying to understand why so much more family violence is committed by men. One important factor we have come up with is rigid sex roles, more accurately called gender roles. In a play, a role is a part assigned to an actor. Offstage, a role is still a part you play, sometimes by choice, sometimes not. A gender role thus is a role you get put into because of your gender. Because you are a woman, you are expected to act in certain ways and be interested in certain things. Because you are a man, you are supposed to act in certain ways and be interested in certain things. Gender role socialization is the process by which we learn these different roles.

## **Activity A: Stereotype Exercise**

### **Purpose:**

To make clear what a stereotype is and to demonstrate basic gender role stereotypes prevalent today.

### **Description of Activity:**

1. Have students ready with pencil and paper. Tell them to write down the first thing that comes to mind when they hear the following words: Masculine, Feminine, Wife, Bachelor, Father, Single Woman, Mother, Husband.
2. Go around the room, sharing responses. Consider each word separately. The teacher/facilitator should point out those responses which reflect gender role stereotypes and question their accuracy: Is that always true of fathers? Are all wives like that?
3. Ask students for activities that are expected of women because they are women and men, because they are men, and list these on the board.
4. When the group has generated a list of activities, ask: Why is it that way? If responses fall into the “because they are better at it” category, engage the group in a debate, making sure they consider whether women or men were born “better” or somehow learned these skills. Usually, however, students respond with some variation on “because that’s the way it’s always been done.” They do not necessarily see any logic to the role division and that is an important point to underline. End by asking whether they think such gender role divisions should continue. This is a good place to share a personal anecdote about a way in which gender role divisions have negatively affected you as an adult.



## **Activity B: Growing Up Male and Female**

### **Purpose:**

To encourage students to draw on material from their own childhood and adolescence to further understand how gender roles are learned and how they affect us as adults.

### **Description of Activity:**

1. Hand out “Growing Up Male and Female” questionnaire for students to fill out individually. You could have them do it for homework if you want to leave more time for group discussion. Acknowledge that they may not be able to answer all the questions; they may not remember or they may not have a sibling of the opposite sex. It is fine to leave some questions blank.

2. To process the questionnaire, go over one section of it at a time. Ideally your time frame will be open ended.

3. Beginning with Childhood, make lists on the board with “boys” and “girls” as headings. As differences appear, have students guess about the reasons. Why do girls play with dolls and boys with trucks? Ask whether this early treatment affects the way people behave later in life. Are women, for instance, more likely to cry as adults because they were allowed to do so as children?

You can go over the Teenage part of the questionnaire in much the same way. Wherever different rules and expectations for teenage boys and girls surface, ask students whether these rules are fair or reasonable.

4. In discussing the Future section, list under the headings “male” and “female” what students have said they will be doing in ten years. If students seem embarrassed to be identified with their own responses, you can collect the questionnaires and quickly jot down the answers on the board, telling students to watch for patterns as the list grows.

When the list is complete, have students try to explain differences by gender. Refer back to childhood socialization whenever possible. Did more girls mention being married and having families? Why? Focus on differences in the kinds of jobs listed. Students may notice that more male jobs require physical strength, while female jobs demand patience and gentleness. Male jobs may involve constructing things, while female jobs may involve working with people. Draw lines between jobs within the same profession (doctor/nurse, cook/waitress) and ask students to consider disparities within the same field. This enables them to see how men’s jobs have more status and power, even when women and men work in the same field.

If students’ future plans do not reflect traditional male/female roles or if you are working with a single sex group, it will be hard for students to identify patterns by gender. In that case, have students quickly list jobs traditionally done by men and women (as opposed to jobs they want to do) and then proceed with a discussion of differences as outlined above.

End by asking how many students answered “What would you like to be doing in ten years?” differently from, “What do you think you will be doing in ten years?” Why the discrepancy? What things in our society may prevent us from doing what we want in our futures? Issues of gender, as well as of race and class will undoubtedly surface here. The teacher/facilitator should name these issues for students wherever possible.

## GROWING UP MALE AND FEMALE

Note: Answer as many of the following questions as you can. If you don't have a sibling (a sister or brother) of the opposite sex, just leave that column blank.

### CHILDHOOD YEARS

1. What did you play with when you were little (toys, games, etc.)?
2. What did you get punished for?
3. How did you get punished?
4. Did you learn to cook? Sew? Clean? If so, who taught you?
5. Did you learn to fix things? Take apart motors? etc.? If so, who taught you?
6. In elementary school, what sports did you participate in? What other games did you play?
7. Did the teachers ever treat the boys and girls differently?
8. What happened if you . . .

You

Opposite Sex Sibling

. . . hit a brother  
or sister

. . . got dirty

. . . got upset and  
cried

. . . ran around the house

. . . wanted to go visit  
a neighborhood friend

. . . got a good mark  
in school

. . . got a bad mark  
in school

## TEENAGE YEARS

You

Opposite Sex Sibling

What kind of chores are you expected to do around the house?

Do you babysit for younger siblings?

Do you have a job?

Are you allowed to go out on dates?

What time do you have to be home at night?

What happens if you cut school?

What do you get punished for?

How do you get punished?

How do you like to spend your free time?

## THE FUTURE

Close your eyes and imagine yourself in ten years. What do you think you will be doing? What would you like to be doing?



## **Activity C: Television Viewing Homework and Discussion**

### **Purpose:**

To make participants more aware of the messages TV gives them about male and female roles and about violence.

### **Description of Activity:**

#### **A. Giving the Assignment**

1. Introduce the homework assignment by reviewing the definition of stereotypes (See Introducing the Unit to Students.) Our stereotypes come from a number of sources, and a major source is TV. The homework is to watch TV with an extra eye – an eye looking at how women and men are pictured, and then to fill out a questionnaire.
2. Pass out the question sheet and explain that everyone is to choose one TV category and answer the questions in that box only, using a separate sheet of paper for their answers and any comments they want to make. Let them read over the sheet to clear up confusions. (They might, for instance, need to go over what a “nonsexist” character would be.) Encourage them to watch several hours of programs in the category they have chosen.

## TV VIEWING HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

### Commercials

1. How many commercials were directed towards women? Towards men?
2. How many were directed towards young people?
3. What did women do in the commercials you saw? What did men do?

### Prime Time Programs

1. List all the stereotyped characters (racial minorities, religious groups, income groups, men and women) that you viewed in a program.
2. List the non-sexist, non-stereotyped characters. (For example, were there women performing jobs usually considered men's jobs? Were Black or Latin men or women shown in positions of authority or power usually held by whites?)
3. Are there any characters in the program whom you admire? Which one(s) and why?

### Soap Operas

1. How are male characters portrayed?
2. How are female characters portrayed?
3. List the occupations of female characters and/or of male characters.

### News Programs

1. Who reports the news the most often? Women? Men? Blacks? Latins? Whites?
2. Who appears more in news stories – women, men, or children? Whites or members of racial minorities?
3. How many crimes were reported during a newscast, and who were the victims? Children? Men? Women? How many times for each?

### Rock Videos

1. How many had violence in them? What types of violent acts were shown?
2. How did the people experiencing the violence respond? What happened to people who perpetrated the violence.
3. How were the male singer/dancers dressed? What did their clothes suggest?
4. How were the female singer/dancers dressed? What did their clothes suggest?

## **B. Discussion following Homework**

1. Students can report their finding for each category. You can write the tabulations on the board. For example:

Commercials: How many directed to women?

men?

young people?

What women did:

What men did:

2. The questions below can be used to focus the discussion once the tabulation is done. They can also be used if group members have not done the assignment and do not have specific findings to report.

- Are there one or two types of women you tend to see in TV shows? In commercials? What do they tend to be doing?
- What might little kids learn from watching a lot of cartoons – about men, about women, about violence?
- How many students saw something with violence in it? How common is this? What do you think about it?
- Of the crimes reported in the news or shown in the prime time shows, how many were family violence? What does this mean about how much or little public attention family violence gets?
- What happens when we see the same type of thing repeated over and over, like smiling women cleaning house or tough men shooting bad guys? Does it influence what we expect of women, of men, of ourselves? How?

3. After this last question you can bring out the TV Fact Sheet (attached) and go over it. You could let students read it aloud and comment. One point to make is that with all these hours of TV watching, what we see on TV does have a great impact.

4. See whether the participants have come to an understanding of “cultural messages” – the messages that TV gives us by presenting so many stereotypes of men and women, and so much violence. Ask for where else they get messages which build up or reinforce stereotypes: popular music, movies, magazines, friends, parents.

### **Possible Follow-Up Activities:**

1. Repeat the TV viewing exercise with an eye toward racial stereotypes.
2. Have students write a complaint letter to a company about a product that was advertised in a sexist way.
3. Have students write a situation comedy or soap opera episode with the main characters in reverse gender roles.

## FACTS ABOUT TELEVISION VIEWING

- The average TV set is turned on for 6½ hours per day.
- Most children begin watching television at 2.8 months of age.
- Three-to-five year olds watch TV 54 hours per week.
- By the time a child enters kindergarten, she/he has spent more time in the TV room than a four year college student spends in the classroom.
- By age 17, each child has seen 350,000 commercials.
- By the time a child graduates from high school, she/he will have less than 12,000 hours in front of a teacher and more than 22,000 hours in front of a television set.
- One survey found that junior high school students believe television more than parents, teachers, friends, books, radio, or newspapers.

### Footnotes:

1. Excerpts from the Carnegie Commission's study on the Future of Public Broadcasting, The New York Times, January 31, 1979.
2. H. Himmelwait, et al. "Communications for Social Needs," A White House study, cited in Down Sesame Street, The Network Project, Columbia University.
3. W. Schramm, et al. Television in the Lives of Our Children. Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1961.
4. G. L. Looney, "The Ecology of Childhood," Action for Children's Television, New York: Avon Books, 1976.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. The New York Council on Children's Television, December 1976.



## UNIT VII: STRESS

### ACTIVITIES:

What is Stress	15 minutes
Stress Information Sheet	30 minutes
Responding to Stress	30 minutes

### OVERVIEW

The purpose of this unit is to help students identify sources of stress in our lives and identify potential, non-abusive responses to stressful situations. Within the last few years, social scientists have begun to explore the relationship between stress and family violence. Stress is an emotional and physical response to something which frightens, alarms, endangers or excites us; the body summons extra energy as it prepares to enable us to fight or to flee. In modern life many of the dangers (called stressors) are not so obvious or so simple that we can fight or run away in response. So people build up a good deal of extra “stress energy” which if not discharged effectively, can lead to health problems like headaches and stomach aches, and, in the long run, to stress related diseases.

Some people, more often men than women, discharge their extra “stress energy” in violent actions. Stressors which commonly trigger family violence are: problems associated with work (being laid off or fired from a job, unemployment, trouble with boss or co-workers); death or poor health of family members (illness, injury); changes in marital or family status (divorce, separation, birth of a child, increase arguing with spouse or in-laws); mobility (moving to a new neighborhood or part of the country); and problems with children (severe difficulty at school or with the law).

However, in talking to students about stress, it is important to emphasize that while stress is sometimes a contributing cause of family violence, particularly of child abuse, it is not an excuse for it.

### INTRODUCING THE UNIT TO STUDENTS:

Stress is something people talk about a lot of these days: “She’s under so much stress”. . . “I’m all stressed out”. . . “Getting up in the morning to go to school is so stressful.” People sometimes use stress as an explanation of family violence: “He was having a hard time at work and the stress was getting to him”. . . “The stress of worrying about money and being home with the kids of all day finally got to her.”

Stress and family violence are related. While stress is never an excuse for family violence, it does sometimes contribute to it. And stress is almost always a result of family violence. Victims of abuse live under great stress.

In this unit we are going to look at just what stress is. We will figure out what causes stress for each of us. And we will look at ways to respond to stress.

## **Activity A: What is Stress**

### **Purpose:**

To provide an introduction to stress based on participants' own experiences.

### **Description of Activity:**

1. Word Association: Begin with a very quick word association exercise. Ask: What do you think of when you hear the word "stress"? Write all responses up on the board or on newsprint.

2. Guided Memory: Have participants get relaxed and quiet. Tell them to close their eyes. When the room has been quiet for a minute, read them the following guided memory. Read it slowly, pausing where the dots are.

Think about scary things that have happened to you. . .

Think back to one very scary situation . . . Where were you? How old were you? . . . Was it night or day? . . . Were you alone? What was happening? Were you afraid? . . . What else were you feeling? . . . How did your body feel? . . . What did you do? . . . How did you feel afterwards? . . . End.

Go around, asking what physical sensations participants had in their scary situations. List these on the board, alongside the words associated with stress. Ask for the emotional feelings and add these to the board as well.

## **Activity B: Stress Information Sheet**

### **Purpose:**

To answer basic questions about stress; to help participants identify stressful situations in their own lives.

### **Description of Activity:**

1. Hand each participant a copy of the Stress Information Sheet. Go over Part I, What is Stress, comparing the definition and indicators of stress with their own words and remembered feelings.

2. Go over Part II, What Causes Stress. In talking about specific examples, include ones from the guided memory exercise. Point out that different situations cause stress for different people. It depends on:

- How important the situation is to you. The more you have at stake, the more stressful a situation is likely to be.

Example: If you have to pass a certain test in order to graduate from high school, that test will be more stressful to you than to a student who is assured of graduating, whatever the outcome of the test.

Example: If a parent is abusing you, it is more stressful than if a stranger mugs you on the street.

- How self-confident you are. If you see yourself as inferior, incompetent or worthless, more situations will seem threatening and thus stressful to you.

- How much control you have over the situation. If you discover you have options, you feel less helpless.

Example: A teenage girl who gets pregnant unintentionally will be under a lot of stress. If she realizes that she does have options – she can have the baby and there are special programs for teenage parents to give her support; she can have an abortion, or she can give the baby up for adoption – the situation will seem less helpless, and thus less stressful to her.

Example: Women who are battered feel trapped. They are threatened constantly by their abuser who tells them that if they try to leave, something terrible will happen to them or to their children, or to their relatives. What happens when they contact a program for battered women is that they learn that they do have some options. They can move temporarily to a shelter where the address is kept secret or, at least in Massachusetts, they can go into court and the court will order the abuser to vacate the house.

Sometimes, though, we have no options. Frustrations build up from the feeling that our lives are controlled by others who do not necessarily have our best interests in mind. These feelings lead to tremendous stress.

In talking about long-term conditions that cause stress, point out that many diseases seem to be caused by stress. These include hypertension, high blood pressure and heart disease. Ulcers, migraines and back problems are other persistent physical conditions often associated with stress.

For example, battered women often turn up in hospitals not for injuries they've sustained, but for conditions connected to stress like constant migraines or weight loss. The constant fear they live in wrecks havoc on their bodies.

3. Hand out the attached Stress in your Life Worksheet and have group members fill it out. Go around the room, asking participants to share the situations they listed (stressors) and the feelings they had (indicators). To summarize, the teacher/facilitator can ask the group to generalize: What kinds of situations seem particularly stressful to teenagers? What seem to be the most common indicators of stress? Collect these worksheets and the information sheets at the end of the class and hold them for the next meeting.



## STRESS INFORMATION SHEET

**I. WHAT IS STRESS?** Stress is the body's physical and emotional reaction to circumstances that endanger, frighten, confuse, anger or excite us.

### Physical Indicators of Stress

muscles tense  
stomach gets upset  
heart beats faster  
breathing is quicker  
more endurance in muscles  
sweat

### Emotional Indicators of Stress

anger  
fear  
alertness  
nervousness  
excitement

**II. WHAT CAUSES STRESS?** Specific incidents (called stressors) which we personally perceive as dangerous or threatening, such as:

A car speeding towards us

OR

A fight with a parent  
or friend

A rapist attacking us

OR

A test at school  
A date or a party

### Long Term Conditions:

being poor  
being discriminated against  
living in very noisy or crowded conditions  
being lonely  
having little control over your life

**III. WHEN IS STRESS A PROBLEM?** When we are under stress, our bodies create a feeling of extra energy. This extra energy gives us the power, for example, to run faster than we have ever run in our lives to get out of the way of a speeding car. In running, we release that extra stress energy. Stress becomes a problem for us when there is nothing to do with the extra energy our bodies develop during a stressful situation. Until we find a way to get rid of the stress energy, we feel tense, anxious or angry.

## **IV. HOW DO WE RELEASE STRESS ENERGY?**

### **Ways of Responding to Stress:**

**AGGRESSION:** Positive ways: Pushing a friend out of the  
way of an oncoming truck.

Yelling at the top of our lungs  
to scare an attacker.

Negative ways: Violence or destructive behavior,  
being physically or verbally abusive.

**WITHDRAWING:** by leaving the scene altogether, or, if that is not possible, by escaping, by ignoring it, daydreaming, drinking, eating, or using drugs.

**WORKING FOR CHANGE:** In a situation where you can do something to get rid of the causes of stress, you can use the stress energy (often felt as anger) to work for change – change in a relationship, change in working conditions at your job, change in laws which discriminate against minorities.

**ADAPTING:** is changing how you respond to whatever is causing the stress. Adapting is good for situations in which the source of the stress is something you cannot do anything about, like having an alcoholic parent. Programs like Alateen, for children of alcoholics, reduce stress by helping you see that you are not responsible for your parents' drinking. Exercise and relaxation techniques also help adapt to stress.

## STRESS IN YOUR LIFE

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

Think back on this past week. Describe two situations that were stressful for you. If you have trouble remembering, look back at the list of physical and emotional indicators on the STRESS INFORMATION SHEET. Think about whether you had any of these feelings in the past week. What caused them?

### Stressful Situation #1

Describe it:

Physical and Emotional Symptoms:

What you did:

### Stressful Situation #2

Describe it:

Physical and Emotional Symptoms:

What you did:

## Activity C: Responding to Stress

### **Purpose:**

To identify and evaluate different ways of responding to stress; to practice relaxation techniques as an example of one of the ways to adapt to stress.

### **Description of Activity:**

1. Hand out the Stress Information Sheets again. Go over Part III:

When is Stress a Problem. Stick with it until students grasp the concept of extra stress energy. The common expression “letting off steam” is another way of saying “releasing extra stress energy.” It will be helpful for adolescents to realize that there is often a physiological basis (this pent up stress energy) for the moodiness, depression and tension they sometimes feel.

2. Go over Part IV: Ways of Responding to Stress slowly. Both participants and the teacher/facilitator should contribute additional examples throughout.

a) **Aggression:** Point out to students, as you discuss aggression, that it is a very common way to release extra stress energy. Aggression is positive when it saves yourself or someone else from being hurt and thus reduces stress.

Aggressive responses that are negative, like violence, tend only to create further problems, and thus more stress for you and everyone else around you.

Example: If you are angry at your parents for making you babysit for your little sister after school, and take it out on her by slapping her when she asks you for a snack, you are releasing stress energy. However your sister will be scared of you, your parents will be mad, you'll feel guilty, and you will still be babysitting. All in all, your aggressive response (slapping your sister) has created more stress, not less.

b) **Withdrawing:** Evaluate with participants different ways of withdraw — ing from a stressful situation. Leaving, rather than hitting someone or being hit is definitely a positive way to respond to stress. Pulling back from a situation and then later trying to see the humor in it, or talking to a friend for comfort and support are also positive ways of withdrawing. Many people, however, withdraw when they feel tense by bottling up their feelings, by drinking or by taking drugs. Again, as with violence in response to stress, being drunk or stoned creates its own problems and in many situations, more stress.

c) **Working for Change:** Trying to change the conditions causing stress is the most effective way to respond. Ask students why this might be true. Emphasize that when you have identified something that is causing you stress, you should strategize about ways you might get that situation changed. Bring up some of the stress producing situations participants have mentioned and ask for “Working for Change” ways to respond to those situations. List responses on the board and note how many involve



doing something on your own, versus working with other people. You might want to refer back to the list of long-term stressors (poverty, etc.), and ask: What have people done in the past, or what are they doing currently, to change these conditions? Finally, point out that even when we do not succeed in changing a situation, just trying often makes us feel better. The phrase, “Well, at least I’ve tried”, reflects that sentiment.

d) **Adapting:** Sometimes, you cannot change the thing that is causing you stress. What you can change is how the stress affects you. Physical activity seems a particularly good way to deal with effects of stress. When we are tense and anxious, playing basketball, going for a jog, or taking an aerobic class makes us feel much better. We have released that stress energy. Ask students if they can see how this is true in their own experiences.

3. Write these four ways of responding to stress on the board: Aggression, Withdrawing, Working for Change, and Adapting. Hand back the Stress in Your Life worksheet and have students note which method they had, in fact, used. Do a group census: How many responded by withdrawing etc.? To end, ask whether anyone can now see a more positive way they might have responded to the same stressful situation.

4. Relaxation exercise: Explain to students that as people’s awareness of stress and its effects has grown over the past 10 years, so have the number of techniques for dealing with stress. They themselves may have had some exposure to meditation, yoga, or self-hypnosis. Explain that to close this session you are going to share with them one technique they could learn that many people use to alleviate symptoms of stress, like headaches or stomach aches. Finally, explain that for this technique to work, they have to be very quiet, and to concentrate on what you are saying. The whole exercise will only take 3 to 4 minutes.

Ask students to put down anything they might have in their hands, to try to sit up straight, and to take a slow, deep breath, counting mentally to 10 as they do so. Then they should exhale very slowly (also on the count of 10). Repeat two or three times. Use the following text to help them do a relaxation visualization. The dots indicate places to pause:

Try to get comfortable in your seat, shut your eyes and imagine a very quiet, peaceful and beautiful place . . . It could be a beach on the ocean, or a big meadow, or a stand of trees . . . Try to notice what time of day or night it is, and what time of year . . . Is it a warm and sunny spring morning? A late afternoon in the fall? . . . Walk slowly into that space, and find a nice, comfortable spot to lie down . . . Feel the ground support you, notice whether you’re lying on dirt, or grass, or sand . . . Let your muscles totally relax . . . Imagine lying there for a long time . . . Imagine that you are slowly, slowly getting up . . . Notice whether it’s a different time of day . . . now; is it darker? cooler? hotter than when you first lay down? . . . As you get up, you notice that you feel refreshed, and renewed. When you feel ready, open your eyes.

Ask what it was like to do this exercise. Did you get a specific image of a place in mind? Was it a place you have been to, or an imaginary place? Were there very few or many details in your image? Do you feel any more relaxed now than you did before? Can you understand why this technique can be used to relieve headaches? Do you think you could talk yourself back to your special place?

If students enjoyed this brief visualization exercise you could check to see whether the local library has any self-hypnosis or relaxation tapes. You could then spend a whole session trying out some of these techniques.

5. Summary: To pull together some of the diverse threads of this unit, you can say: In order to be clear and true to yourself in a stressful situation: it is especially important to be aware of your feelings. It is important to remember that the feelings that you have when you are under stress are hard to change, and it would not necessarily be appropriate for you to do so. What's important is how you act on those feelings. If you are frustrated and angry about something at school, you could pick a fight with your little brother (aggressive), you could go out and get drunk (withdrawn), or you could go for a hard bicycle ride. Each of these are ways to use up your stress energy and would allow you to feel some relief. But the first two actions would probably lead to more problems, and, therefore, more stress.

We all are most likely to respond to stress in ways that we have learned by observing others around us. If we see most of our friends or family fighting when they have too much stress energy, it's likely that we'll find ourselves in fights also. If we see others around us escaping by eating, drinking, watching TV, or getting high in response to a threat, it's likely that we'll at least try those things too.

It is important to realize that, while we don't usually have much choice about how we feel when we're under stress, we do have a choice about how we respond to it. Responding to stress in a way that's different from what we've learned from those around us is difficult and takes practice, but we can do it.

### **Possible Follow-Up Activities:**

1. Do Activity A, Unit VIII: Handling Anger: I'm so Mad I Could."
2. Have students keep a Stress Journal for a week, noting everything that was stressful to them, how they felt and what they did.

## UNIT VIII: PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

### ACTIVITIES:

Handling Anger	20 minutes
How Not To Be Abusive (role plays)	15 minutes
What Would You Do If . . . (case studies/problem solving)	45 minutes
Governor's Commission: Ending Family Violence	30 minutes
Producing a Resource Guide	several sessions

### OVERVIEW

The prevention of family violence is clearly the underlying goal of the entire curriculum. Increasing awareness of different types of family violence, understanding its causes, recognizing the need to bring abuse into the open, examining ways to communicate better in dating situations and exploring non-violent ways to cope with stress are all necessary parts of prevention.

This unit, then, reinforces much of what has been explored previously. The activities move from the personal to the societal, from encouraging students to find better ways to handle their anger to encouraging them to think about how to change the society in such a way as to eradicate family violence.

In this unit, there is an added emphasis on how to intervene effectively when someone is being abused and how to use outside resources. Battering, child abuse and sexual abuse often continue to occur because they are considered "private business." This is especially true of battering, because there is no mandated reporting law as there is in the situation of child abuse. When we hear a fight going on in the apartment next to ours, or see a man and woman fighting on the street, our response is too often, "Well, that's their business." Studies have shown, for example, that given three situations of fighting in public – between two men, between two women, and between a man and a woman – witnesses are least likely to intervene when the dispute is between a man and a woman. Rather than being seen as the assault that it is, a man hitting a woman or even raping a woman who knows him is assumed to be a private matter. Similarly, when a battered woman turns up covered with bruises in the emergency room of a hospital and says that she fell down the stairs, doctors often take the statement at face value, although they may know full well that those injuries could not have resulted from the reported fall.

The shame that accompanies abuse often prevents the woman or child from admitting it is happening. Such an admission, however, is a key step in preventing abuse because it brings outside opinion into what has become a morally distorted situation. It is critical for women and children who are abused that their friends, relatives and people in the helping professions probe a little, encourage them to talk about their situations. We need to express our concern for them. We must let them know that we think they deserve something better in their lives, that there are ways to make the abuse stop or to remove themselves from the abusive situation, and that we will not reject them.

A grim reality is that abuse seldom stops as long as the abuser continues to “get away with it.” Abusers need to be confronted with and censured for their violence by their family, their communities and the legal system, not protected and excused for it. A recent study involving the Minneapolis police department showed that arrest was the single most effective deterrent in preventing future battering. Incest usually ends when the school-age child reveals it to a teacher or her/his mother and the perpetrator is confronted with it. Always, though, consideration needs to be given to a way of confronting the abuse which does not put the person being abused at further risk.



## **Activity A: Handling Anger: “I’m So Mad I Could . . .”**

### **Purpose:**

To have students identify and evaluate their own responses to anger and to examine non-violent responses to anger.

### **Description of Activity:**

1. Duplicate and hand out copies of the attached sheet, “Handling Anger . . .” This is a transcript of comments made by teenagers in response to the question: “What do you do when you’re really angry?”

2. Introduce the activity with a brief statement about how everyone gets really angry at times and everyone develops ways of dealing with that anger. Point out that you may like the way you handle your anger, and it works to calm you down, or maybe you do not like what you do when you are very angry, but find yourself behaving in a certain way despite yourself. Be careful not to say or imply that certain ways of handling anger are much “better” than other ways, so that students will not feel judged and inhibited in their responses.

3. Begin the activity by having several students read aloud from the transcript of teenagers’ comments. Ask participants to put check marks next to those comments most similar to their own way of handling anger. Then ask, “How do people in this room handle anger?” As they respond, write their ways of dealing with anger on the board. If there are few responses, ask for a show of hands as to how many people checked off each of the listed responses, and then summarize the most common methods used by the group.

4. Use the following questions:

- Did you notice any general differences in the ways boys in the group respond to anger as compared to girls?
- If students can identify a pattern of response based on gender, have them try to explain it. Draw, if possible on previous discussions of gender roles.
- Is what you do when you are angry similar to or different from what adults in your family do when they are angry?

Consciously or unconsciously we often adopt ways of handling anger learned from our families. Children who are physically abused may well become abusive parents, for example. It is important to stress here, however, that we can reject family patterns if necessary and learn new ways of handling anger and expressing feelings.

- Do you think some ways of handling anger are better than others? Why?
- Emphasize here the positive value of “talking it out.” A major cause of male violence is that men do not talk about their feelings, but rather hold them in until they explode in a violent response. Encourage students to share situations in which they were really angry and talking it out helped.

- What happens when you let your anger explode into violence, and you hit someone? What might the consequences be for you and for the person you hit?

Have students consider both emotional, as well as physical consequences. Also, focus on questions of relative power. Who usually hits whom? Why?. Have them compare the feelings of a three year old hit by his 15 year old sister, with that of a 15 year old hit by her three year old brother. Family violence is invariably perpetrated by the more powerful person on the less powerful, and serves to reaffirm that power dynamic. The violence will usually continue as long as the person in power can get away with it. It continues until his power gets challenged, maybe a teenager threatening to strike back or by leave, or a woman calling the police for the first time.

## HANDLING ANGER: "I'M SO MAD I COULD. . ."

The following comments were made by teenagers in response to the question of what they do when they are really angry. Are their views typical of you and your friends' response to anger?

. . .If I'm angry at someone or something, I'd rather just talk it out to someone. Otherwise, I'll just take it out on someone else. Sometimes I'll do that. Because it's all inside me. Like everything builds up inside me. And then like when someone says something I'd snap at them or something. And to me, talking does better, 'cause I got it out instead of like keeping everything hidden inside me.

. . .I let things build up inside. And then when some stupid little thing happens, everything blows over and I take it out on my family. Or the closest person around. When we go to talk it out, I just always say, well, nobody ever listens. Cause that's just the easiest thing to say, I guess.

. . .I go to my room and listen to my stereo. I put my earphones on. . .put them on. . .and I just listen to it, so when someone calls you I can't hear them, and stuff like that.

. . .Play basketball, I guess. Just go off by myself and play basketball.

. . .I sleep. I sleep. I sleep, that's all.

. . .I put the TV on "General Hospital." I sit down and have a glass of Tab, and I eat my yogurt.

. . .Lock yourself in the bathroom and give a good scream.

. . .Try to think of something else, and do something that will make you happy. Or eat.

. . .Now. . .I just don't know. Sometimes I just close my door and go in my room and go to sleep so I don't have to think about it sometimes. But it gets real rough at times, and you know, like if you was to say something to me, and seem like you was going to fight, my hands would automatically go up. So I try not to fight. Try to keep my calm. . .I try to calm myself down. . .I would practice. I would start boxing. I would take myself in the room and start lifting weights. The angrier I get the more it makes me practice.

. . .And sometimes I talk to certain people like my friend Daryl. I talk to him about my problem. Or his mother. I have a lot of people I can just talk to about it. But a lot of times like my friend Daryl, his mother knows when I can get highly emotional. And she would call me up to her house and she'd calm me down. I'm all right to a certain point. But I don't get too mad that I just want to destroy everybody. I can calm myself.

. . .Usually if I go out somewhere and I do something like a sport or something, then I get my mind off it. Or if I'm with a bunch of friends . . .

. . .I just be by myself. I just shut the door in my room and I just go in there and that's where I am. And I stay there the whole day if that's what I want. I just don't do anything.

. . .Sit down somewhere in the middle of all grass and stuff, and just sit there. Just sit there, be alone, think things out. That's all.

Reprinted from the Adolescence Series of the Family and Community Health Through Caregiving program, Education Development Center, Inc. of Newton.

## **Activity B: How Not to Be Abusive . . . Role Plays**

### **Purpose:**

To give participants a dramatic framework in which to think about non-abusive responses to angering situations.

### **Background:**

Student pairs come up with non-abusive responses to cases number one and three from the Human Graph Exercise (Unit I, pg. 22 ) and then role play these scenes, with their new endings, for the group as a whole. The group then evaluates the non-abusive responses. (See Unit V: Activity B, for ideas on setting up a role play).

### **Description of Activity:**

1. Introduction: Hand out the cases from the Human Graph Exercise. If students have done the activity, remind them of it. Then they were asked to rate various responses from Abusive to Non-Abusive. Now they are going to have a chance to make up their own, non-abusive responses to some of the same situations.
2. Dividing up and Assigning Cases: Divide the group into pairs, ideally male/female ones, with the teacher/facilitator participating as well. The number of students in the group will determine whether you role play both Case #1 and Case #2, or whether you just concentrate on Case #3. There should be at least three different versions presented of the same case. So, if you have only eight to ten people in the group, each pair will work on Case #3, Tom and Linda. With a larger group, you can assign Case #1 as well. (Case #1 calls for four people, or two pairs, and the sex of the characters can be altered to fit that of the actors.)
3. Working in Small Groups: Explain to students that each group is to read the case they have been assigned and come up with what they all agree is a non-abusive and hopefully effective response to the situation. Then they should assign parts among themselves and practice acting out the scene as it is written but with its new, non-abusive ending. They will have about ten minutes to do this.
4. Doing and Discussing the Role Plays: Call the group back together and have the teams role play their scenes. Assure students that the role plays need not be polished, but that they should try to be serious. You might want to volunteer your own team to go first if students seem reluctant to begin. Hold discussion to a minimum until the group has seen all the versions of the same scene. Then get students to comment on how similar or different the various versions were, whether or not all were, in fact, non-abusive responses, and which one they liked best and why.



## **Activity C: Case Studies: What Would You Do If . . .**

### **Purpose:**

To emphasize that one should not accept violence, either as a victim of it or a witness to it; to examine one's responsibility to intervene when aware of abuse; and to suggest appropriate intervention techniques.

### **Description of Activity:**

1. Duplicate and hand out the five case studies, each of which involves a different type of abuse.
2. Read each case study aloud and discuss it using the Discussion Guide for background information. (You might want to select those which would be of most interest to your particular group). To begin the discussion, ask students to think about what they would do if they were in that situation. Try to reach consensus as to the best, most realistic way to help the person being abused, and as to what, if anything, might be said/done to the abuser.
3. The teacher/facilitator's role in the discussion is to encourage students to think through their proposed interventions. Help them empathize with the victims, by asking: "How do you think she would feel if you . . . ?" Ask them if they would want anything said or done to the abuser, and who would be the appropriate person to approach the abuser. Intervening can be awkward or difficult, and teenagers may initially feel powerless, or that it is "none of my business." It is important to air these feelings in the discussion and help students to see that there are usually ways to help.

## WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF . . .

1. Your cousin Cathy announces to you at a family birthday party that she has just gotten engaged to Steve, the guy she has been seeing for the last year. You know that Steve drinks too much and you've seen him slap Cathy in the face, and once, push her out of a car.
2. You (Laura), your boyfriend, and your friend, Sara all go to a party together. Sara meets a guy there whom she starts dancing with. When he offers her a ride home, she accepts because she thinks maybe you and your boyfriend would rather be alone. The next day when you see Sara she is very upset. She tells you that on the way home, the boy had parked in a deserted parking lot, hit her when she insisted he take her home, and then forced her to have sex with him.
3. One night, you stop over at your aunt and uncle's to pick up a sweater you left there. Your aunt is crying, has a bloody nose, and her blouse is ripped half open. Your uncle storms out of the house when you arrive.
4. You are babysitting for a new family on the block. As you help their four year old son get ready for bed, you notice that his body is covered with bruises.
5. You are going home to Jackie's house after school. Fifteen year old Jackie has been your friend off and on for years, but you do not go to her house very often. Her mother is a quiet withdrawn woman and Jackie's father is very domineering. You recall that Jackie used to be pretty shy herself, but has recently become sort of loud and hangs out with the school troublemakers. She is getting in trouble lately by stealing stupid kinds of things from stores, and drinking. When you get to Jackie's house, she goes in and picks up Carey, her six year old sister, joking around with her. As usual, she ignores her mother. Just then Jackie's father walks in and says he is ready to take Carey out. Jackie turns on her father shouting, "Oh no, you don't, you're not going to start doing that to her like you did to me. Don't you touch her!" You suddenly realize what Jackie is talking about.

## Discussion Guide for What Would You Do If . . .

Case #1: The point to emphasize is that if we are worried about the choices a friend is making, then we can and should at least express our concern to the friend. Furthermore, if abuse is present in the courtship period, it will probably get even worse after marriage, when it is more “behind closed doors” and harder for the woman to leave. Also, it is important to point out that whenever you accept abuse, you make that abuse more acceptable and more likely to happen again. The usual pattern in abusive relationships is that the abuse does not start until the couple is married or living together, but that various warning signals are present throughout the dating period. It is worth describing some of those warning signals to teenagers: a tendency to react violently, possessiveness, abuse of alcohol or drugs, and very traditional beliefs about the respective roles of men and women.

Case #2: Students may well respond “I’d tell her she shouldn’t have taken a ride with him.” The teacher’s/facilitator’s role here is to help all group members move beyond a blame-the-victim response. You could ask, “What’s wrong with accepting a ride home?” or “Does accepting a ride home with someone mean that you want to have sex with them?”

Date rape is a common phenomenon. Reiterate here with students that anytime sex is forced on someone it is rape, regardless of whether you know the person or started out willingly with him. Rape is always the fault of the rapist, not the person raped. Young women rarely press charges in date rape cases, or even make it public, but at least they should have friends, counselors or parents assuring them that it was not their fault. As a friend, you could:

- Say you’re sorry.
- Remind her, over and over, that it is not her fault, since she’s likely to blame herself.
- Encourage her to talk about what happened; listen fully to her.
- Help her decide on an adult she could talk with.
- Ask her whether you can somehow “blow the whistle” on him (among your friends, or at school or to his parents) so he gets disapproval for what he has done.
- Encourage her to hang up on him if he calls.

Case #3: Intervention is trickier when the person being abused is living in the same house as the abuser. Any disapproval expressed or action taken against the abuser can result in increased abuse. Intervention here should focus, at least initially, on the aunt. Students should ask the aunt what is wrong, if she wants help of any kind, if she would come to their parents’ house. The aunt might deny that anything serious has happened and refuse to leave. In that case, the niece/nephew should stay with the aunt for a while to make sure everything is all right.



In discussing the case, it is important to raise or reiterate the dynamics of shame and fear that accompany battering. You might ask students what they would do if the aunt begs them not to say anything to anybody. They probably should tell their parents anyway, but in telling them, inform them of the aunt's reluctance to have the matter made public. We also suggest that at some future time, the niece/nephew could give the aunt the phone number of the closest program that works with battered women.

This would be a good point to describe to participants the legal options that might be available to the aunt. In Massachusetts, she could force the uncle to move out and stop abusing her under the provisions of a law entitled the Abuse Prevention Act. This law allows anyone who is being abused by a spouse, ex-spouse, blood relative or household member to get temporary restraining orders from the court. You do not need a lawyer; it is a simple, free procedure.

If the judge agrees that you have been abused, the court will order the abuser to vacate the premises (even if it is his house) and to stop abusing you. If the abuser violates these orders, he (or she) can be arrested. Participants might be interested to know that in one year alone (1983), 17,881 abuse prevention petitions were filed in Massachusetts. For information on existing legal options in other states, call the battered women's program nearest you.

Case #4: Responses here will be indignant and protective. "I'd take him home with me" is often the sentiment echoed. The mandated child abuse reporting law and who one reports child abuse to should both be reviewed here. In Massachusetts, the law requires all persons in the helping professions to report any case of child abuse or suspected child abuse which comes to their attention. Anyone (a neighbor, babysitter, etc.) should also report their suspicions by calling the Department of Social Services. (See Unit II, Activity B, Discussion Guide for more information on reporting child abuse.)

We suggest that the babysitter in the case gently ask the child how he got his bruises and watch his response (evasive? scared? direct?). S/he should say nothing to the parents, but leave the house armed with the names, address and phone number of the parents. The babysitter could discuss the situation with her or his own parents (unless s/he comes from a family where there's violence) and then together they could make a report.

Case #5: This may be the hardest case for students to respond to. They are fully aware of the taboo associated with incest, but it is confusing here to know who to help, to protect, to reach out to – the little sister? the teenager? They will wonder, maybe angrily, why the mother does not do something, and will feel uncomfortable and powerless themselves. Because there is often reluctant complicity in the incest from other family members, including the victim her/himself, and because most incest is not violent, but rather coercive and seductive, as witnesses we feel confused and angry and tend to reject the family as a whole, not just the offender. The desire to run away from incest families is very common.



Depending on how much material on child sexual abuse students have covered, they may need some time to discuss the situation itself before coming up with appropriate intervention strategies.

Intervention should focus initially on Jackie in her difficult, self-appointed role as protector of her younger sibling. Students might first talk to a sympathetic older person about the scene they have witnessed, and then try to encourage Jackie to come with them to talk to that person, saying something like, "Listen, I talked to my Mom about it a little, and I know she wants to help." They should know, and make sure the older person knows, that child sexual abuse is included in the mandated child abuse reporting law (See above, Case #4). They would want to involve the Department of Social Services in the case to prevent Carey, the younger sister, from becoming an incest victim and at the same time encourage Jackie to seek counseling. Incest continues to have devastating psychological effects on its victims long after the abuse itself has ceased.

## **Activity D: Governor's Commission Exercise:**

### **What Can We Do To End Family Violence?**

#### **Purpose:**

To review and summarize the causes of family violence; to provide a structure which encourages students to articulate their own short-term and long-term solutions.

#### **Background:**

In small groups, students imagine that they are a special committee appointed by the Governor to end family violence in the state. Each group comes up with recommendations of ways to end one form of family violence. Students should be encouraged to brainstorm about both short-term and long-term solutions to the problem of family violence. Short-term ones offer alternatives to women and children who are abused (shelters, jobs, counseling, housing, childcare) and better restraining of the abusers (treating abuse of women and children as a crime, counseling batterers). Long-term solutions involve large scale change of all the institutions in our lives so that they promote and reflect values of equality, rather than dominance and subordination between men and women, or between any other groups of people. We need, ultimately, to embrace a new credo, that all men and women are created equal.

#### **Description of Activity:**

1. Review with participants briefly some of the causes of family violence as you have identified them together over the past several sessions. Then say:

You are going to be divided into small groups. Each group is going to imagine that it is a committee appointed by the Governor (or the Mayor) to end family violence. There will be one committee each on battering, date rape, child abuse and child sexual abuse.

Your committee has the power to do whatever you want and to spend whatever money is necessary to carry out your ideas about how to end the form of family violence you are tackling. Don't worry too much about whether your ideas could be carried out right away. If an idea appeals to you, recommend it even if you think we would never get to do it. Consider how you would use the media, the legislature, the courts, community education, schools, churches, etc. As a committee your job is to come up with four recommendations that all committee members agree would be effective.

2. While the small groups are conferring, the facilitator/teacher can circulate and help students focus on the task at hand. After ten or fifteen minutes, announce that the time is almost up and give each committee a few more minutes to write down their four recommendations.

3. In the larger group, have each committee report its recommendations and write these down on a board. Encourage students to question one another about their solutions. Then use the compiled list as a basis for a further discussion of what we can do to end family violence. You can review briefly the efforts currently underway to end violence, such as battered women's shelters, men's counseling programs, the Abuse Prevention Act, rape crisis centers, the introduction of materials on family violence into the schools.

**Discussion Guide for What Can We Do to End Family Violence:**

Try to keep students from getting bogged down on questions of feasibility of various recommendations. It is far more important that you focus on why something is a solution to the problem, thus deepening the groups' analysis of the causes of family violence. For each recommendation, ask "How would this end battering/child abuse."

## **Activity E: Producing a Resource Guide**

### **Purpose:**

To emphasize the value of seeking help for debilitating family and personal problems; to reduce the formidability of approaching an agency for help; and to familiarize students with resources available to them in their area.

### **Background:**

Young people need to know that there are resources available to them when they find themselves with difficult problems and they need to be encouraged to seek help to talk about their concerns. Even if a list of resources is provided to young people, they may have difficulty initiating contact with services, either because of the debilitating effects the specific crisis is having on them, or because they feel intimidated by an unknown agency. When resources can be explored during a non-crisis time, and information can be collected from peers, the formidability of approaching an outside agency for help may be diminished in the future.

In this activity, students identify problems for which one might seek outside help and explore possible resources appropriate for each type of problem. They discuss fears and concerns about contacting outside resources and turn those concerns into questions to ask agencies. They interview these agencies and report back their findings. The group then produces an annotated resource guide and distributes it.

Producing a resource guide empowers students and builds skills on many levels by teaching them how to evaluate and use available services. However, like any true skill building process, it has a number of steps and is time consuming. If sufficient classroom or group time is not available, you might consider doing the activity in an out-of-class setting, such as a peer education program, or a student club.

This activity requires that teachers/facilitators know beforehand the names of major social service programs in a given area and the types of problems they handle. This is not an overwhelming task. Make a list of problems you think students are likely to identify with. As most agencies have extensive referral lists, two or three phone calls will probably generate the information you need. In Massachusetts, for example, you could call the Department of Social Services, the Social Service Unit for the nearest big hospital and the Massachusetts Coalition of Battered Women's Service Groups. Each could give you the names of agencies that work with such issues as child abuse, drug abuse, battering, rape, pregnancy, abortion and suicide.



**Description of Activity:**

1. Discussion: Identifying problems, resources and concerns about contacting resources. (Time: 30-40 minutes)

Have students define and give examples of what a resource is. These may be formal agencies or informal contacts (a rabbi, friend, teacher, etc.). Together, generate a list of problems for which resources might be available and write these on the board.

Ask whether anyone knows the name of an agency in the area that helps people with any one of the problems students have identified and add those names to the list. The teacher/facilitator should be prepared to fill in gaps here, as young people’s familiarity with service agencies will vary greatly from group to group. Students should be encouraged to consider informal resources as well: For example, this list might look like this.

List A

Friend hooked on drugs	Alateen Project Rap Council on Alcohol
Abusive parents	Office for Children Department of Social Services Children’s Protective Services
Father beats mother	Help for Abused Women and their Children Local Police Station Coalition of Battered Women’s Service Groups
Sexually abused by a stranger	Rape Crisis Center Local hospital rape unit

Discuss with students how they would feel about contacting resources if they needed help. Would they do it? Why or why not? Then focus the discussion on what they would like to know about a given resource before they would feel comfortable in contacting it. Make a second list of these concerns.

LIST B

- ... Does it cost money?
- ... Will they tell my parents?
- ... Would anyone there speak Spanish?
- ... Do they help young people?
- ... Would they call the police?

2. Small Group Work: Developing and Assigning Interviews (Time: 15 minutes).

Ask for two to four students who would like to explore the resources available for each of the problems in List A. Have each group meet to adapt the list of concerns (List B) into a list of questions they will use in doing phone interviews with the resources they contact. Each group member should then make her/his own copy of the questions, leaving space to record the answers, and choose one resource to call and interview.

3. Role Playing the Interviews (Time: 15 minutes)

For homework, students are going to be doing a phone interview with an agency. They will have to explain the purpose of their call and conduct the interview. This will not be easy for them, as few young people have ever been in the role of interviewer and many are shy when using the phone. Doing and discussing a couple of role plays with hypothetical agencies can make students feel more comfortable with their task. The teacher/facilitator can role play a hypothetical agency spokesperson and a student volunteer can use her/his questionnaire to role play the call. The group then discusses the role play, including suggestions for ways students can make their purpose clear, and comes to a consensus on whether the hypothetical agency is one they would recommend.

4. Homework: Doing the Interviews (Time: 20 minutes)

Before the class meets again, students should call the resource she/he has chosen and do a phone interview, using the questions their group has developed. They should record the response they get for each question, how they were treated by the resource, and, finally, determine whether or not they would recommend the resource to their peers.

5. Compiling the Results (Time: 20 minutes)

On the assigned day, the groups bring in their results and a final list is compiled on the board. For example:

<u>Category of Problem</u>	<u>Phone #</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Resource #1	111-1111	Helpful, will call parents
Resource #2	222-2222	Friendly, all white
<u>Category of Problem</u>		
Resource #1	333-3333	Regular teen meetings, donations.
Resource #2	444-4444	Drop-in center, all ages, free
Resource #3	555-5555	One-to-one with adult, no choice.

In compiling the findings, the teacher/facilitator should allow time for students to share their stories of making the contacts. How did it go? How did you feel about doing the interview? Was it easy or hard to get the information you wanted? Questions like these can help students reflect upon and share the process they have gone through of actively seeking information.

When the list is completed, have participants to think about what they would like to do with their resource guide. In addition to each group member receiving a copy, are there other young people in the school or program who could use a copy? Could the guide be published in the school newspaper or program newsletter? Once the resource guide is typed, a volunteer committee could work on duplicating and distributing it.

## RESOURCES

### I. Films Referred to :

The following films can be purchased or rented from:

O.D.N. PRODUCTIONS, INC.  
74 Varick Street, Suite 304  
New York, New York 10013  
212-431-8923

“The Party Game” and “End of The Road:” Part of the Acquaintance Rape Prevention Series. Purchase: \$595; Rental: \$125 (series), \$50 (single film).

“Deck the Halls:” part of the Time Out Series. Purchase: \$750; Rental: \$125 (series, \$50 single film).

“No More Secrets:” Purchase: \$340; Rental: \$60;

“We Will Not Be Beaten” is available from:

Transition House Films  
25 West Street  
Boston, MA 02111  
617-426-1912

Rental Fee: \$25

Several of the O.D.N. films are available for loan or rental in the Boston area. For information, contact the Resource Center for the Prevention of Family Violence and Sexual Abuse, at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. In addition, many battered women’s programs own copies of “We Will Not Be Beaten” and may be willing to loan or rent the film.

### II. Other Curricula Referred to:

● Adolescence Series, Family And Community Health Through Caregiving, Educational Development Center Inc., 55 Chapel Street, Newton, MA 02169.

● Changing Learning, Changing Lives, A High School Women’s Study Curriculum, by Barbara Gates, Susan Klaw and Adria Steinberg, The Feminist Press, Old Westbury, New York 1979.

● No Easy Answers, A Sexual Abuse Prevention Curriculum, Illusion Theater, 528 Hennepin Avenue, Room 309, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

### III. Organizations That Can Supply Materials, Films, Speakers, Bibliographies, etc :

● Emerge: A Men’s Counseling Service on Domestic Violence  
25 Huntington Avenue, Room 324  
Boston, MA 02126.



- Massachusetts Coalition of Battered Women's Service Groups (MCBWSG). 25 West Street, Boston, MA 02116.
- Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Resource Center for the Prevention of Family Violence and Sexual Abuse, 150 Tremont Street, Boston, MA 02111.
- National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV). 728 N Street, NW, Washington D.C., 20036
- National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, Office of Child Development, P.O. Box 1182, Washington D.C., 20013.
- Office for Children, 150 Causeway Street, Boston, MA 02114.

#### **IV. Battered Women's and Rape Crisis Programs:**

##### **NORTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS:**

##### ● **Battered Women's Programs**

Haverhill:	Women's Resource Center	<b>617</b> 373-4041
Lawrence:	Women's Resource Center	685-2480
Lowell:	Alternative House	454-1436
Malden:	Services Against Family Violence (SAFE)	324-2221
Newburyport:	Women's Crisis Center	465-2155
Salem:	Help for Abused Women and their Children (HAWC)	744-6851

##### ● **Rape Crisis Programs**

Beverly:	Unit Against Rape and Sexual Assault (URSA)	<b>617</b> 927-URSA
Gloucester:	Cape Ann Sexual Assault (CASA)	283-2272
Lawrence:	Greater Lawrence Action Against Sexual Assault	683-6303
Lowell:	Rape Crisis Services of Greater Lowell	458-2084

##### **GREATER BOSTON AREA:**

##### ● **Battered Women's Programs**

Boston:	Casa Myrna Vazquez	<b>617</b> 262-9581
Boston:	Renewal House	566-6881
Cambridge:	Transition House	661-7203
Dorchester:	Mary Lawson Foreman House	825-1666
East Boston:	Harbor Me	889-2111
Jamaica Plain:	Native Women Against Violence	232-0343
Jamaica Plain:	Elizabeth Stone House	522-3417
Natick:	Women's Protective Services	872-6161
Quincy:	Dove	471-1234
Somerville:	Respond	623-5900
Waltham:	Battered Women Support Committee	899-8676

##### ● **Rape Crisis Programs**

Boston:	Community Program Against Sexual Assault (CPASA)	<b>617</b> 536-6500
Cambridge:	Boston Area Rape Crisis Center	492-7273
Natick:	Women's Protective Services, Rape Crisis Unit	661-3300

## **SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS:**

### **● Battered Women's Programs**

Attleboro:	New Hope, Inc.	<b>617</b> 695-2113
Brockton:	A Womansplace	588-2041
Fall River:	Women in Stress	673-2400
Hyannis:	Independence House	771-6507
New Bedford:	New Bedford Women's Center	992-4222
Plymouth:	South Shore Women's Center	746-2664

### **● Rape Crisis Programs**

Attleboro:	New Hope, Sexual Assault Program	226-4015
Brockton:	Plymouth County Rape Crisis Center	746-2664
Hyannis:	Rape Crisis Unit, Center for Individual and Family Services	771-1080
New Bedford:	New Bedford Women's Center	996-6656

## **CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS:**

### **● Battered Women's Programs**

Fitchburg:	Women's Resources	<b>617</b> 342-9355
Worcester:	Abby's House	756-5486
Worcester:	Daybreak	755-9030

### **● Rape Crisis Program**

Fitchburg:	LUK, Inc.	<b>617</b> 345-7353
Marlborough:	Rape Crisis Hotline	485-7273
Worcester:	Rape Crisis Program	799-5700

## **WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS**

### **● Battered Women's Programs**

Greenfield:	NELCWIT	<b>413</b> 772-0806
Holyoke:	Womanshelter/Companeras	536-1628
Northampton:	Necessities	586-5066
Pittsfield:	Women's Services Center	443-0089
Springfield:	ARCH	733-2561

### **● Rape Crisis Programs**

Amherst:	Counselor Advocates Against Sexual Assault, Hampshire College	<b>413</b> 549-4600 x 756
Amherst:	Every Woman's Center, University of Mass.	545-0800
Greenfield:	Rape Crisis Program, NELCWIT	772-0806
Pittsfield:	Rape Crisis Center of Berkshire County	443-0089
Springfield:	Abuse and Rape Crisis Hotline, Springfield YWCA	733-7100
Springfield:	Hotline to End Rape and Abuse	733-2561



